

# | Report into the Historic System to Protect and Prevent Abuse of Children in Care in Scotland, 1948-1995

**Report for the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

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**September 2019**



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## Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Aims and Scope .....	1
Methodology .....	3
Organisation of the Report .....	11
<b>Context.....</b>	<b>12</b>
The history of child welfare policy and practice in Scotland: a brief summary .....	12
The Clyde Committee.....	21
New Legislation: The Children Act 1948.....	28
<b>Implementation of Legislative Reform .....</b>	<b>46</b>
Effects of the 1948 Childcare Legislation on the Care of Children.....	46
Case Study II: Child B .....	46
Structures and mechanisms in place to protect children in the care of the state.....	49
Attitudes to Children in Care .....	64
Summary .....	81
<b>Regulation and Inspection in Practice .....</b>	<b>83</b>
Boarding out, 1947-1959 .....	83
Inspection of Boarded-out children.....	96
The Cost of Care .....	107
Policies on Boarding Out, 1959-1969.....	110
Summary of boarding out .....	127
Children's Homes 1948-1968 .....	129
Remand Homes and Approved Schools .....	165
Inspection of Children's Departments.....	173
Summary of Inspection 1948-1968.....	183
<b>The Children and Young Person's Act 1963 and the run up to the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 .....</b>	<b>186</b>
Social work and prevention.....	186
Training .....	188
<b>Implementation of the Social Work Act .....</b>	<b>194</b>
Introduction: Aims of the 1968 Reform.....	194



Implementation .....	196
Structures and mechanisms in place to protect children in the care of the state after 1968 .....	198
Summary .....	214
<b>Care of Children in Practice Under the Social Work Act .....</b>	<b>216</b>
Introduction.....	216
Foster Care.....	216
Residential Care: Overview .....	225
Case Study XIII: Child G.....	227
Case Study XIX: Child H .....	245
Voluntary Providers—including List D Schools .....	250
Case Study XXI: Sibling Group including Child K (placed by the local authority in local authority homes and a Roman Catholic voluntary home) .....	261
Summary .....	270
<b>Patterns in Care 1968-1994 .....</b>	<b>271</b>
The Case of Strathclyde Regional Council and Glasgow City Council's Social Work Services for Children.....	272
Staff Training.....	282
Regulatory Change in the 1980s.....	287
Attitudes to Children .....	290
Reform in the 1990s.....	294
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>298</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Statistics for Children in Care, 1948-1994. ....</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Social Policy for Children—Social Work Sub-Model .....</b>	<b>307</b>

# Introduction

## Aims and Scope

The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry commissioned this report into the existence and effectiveness of the systems that pertained in Scotland to protect children in care and to prevent the abuse of those children in the period framed by the Children Act 1948 and the Children Act 1995.

For the purposes of this report we define children in care as those who were looked after by persons not their birth parents. In practice this means children looked after by the state (local authorities) either directly, or, indirectly by voluntary providers. We do not include those children who were cared for by other family members in kinship care or informal foster arrangements. The children in question were accepted into care (either by the local authority or a voluntary organisation) in the period from c.1940 through to the 1980s. We include children in a range of care provision:

- Boarding out or foster care: whereby a child is placed with a guardian primarily by the local authority but also—in much smaller numbers—by voluntary organisations, sometimes a significant distance from the child's place of birth or former residence.
- Local authority children's homes: these include reception homes, non-denominational residential homes and hostels which provided care for children beyond school leaving age.
- Voluntary provision: this comprises children's homes and residential schools run by religious orders and other voluntary providers. These include Roman Catholic, Protestant, and non-denominational institutions.
- Children who were, after 1968, under supervision of the local authority, but who remained in the care of their family, are only discussed in this report in the context of the prevention policy whereby social workers endeavoured to keep children with their natural parents, but who may have utilised short-term residential or foster care as part of the intervention. The focus here is on the time children spent being cared for outwith their natural family.

The report will also include brief discussion of local authority remand homes and assessment centres, residential centres providing intermediate care, and Approved and List D Schools. It should be noted, however, that although these facilities were very much a part of the Scottish childcare system in the period, and many children progressed from other parts of care provision into these institutions, the regulation

of them was different from other residential childcare facilities, as was the regime of care delivered. Children who were sent overseas by the state or, more commonly, by voluntary organisations, are considered in a separate report. We have also not covered the experiences of children brought into care in infancy or early years and who were placed for adoption, although it should again be noted that such cases also formed a large part of the work performed by local authority childcare officials and, to a lesser extent, was included within the remit of some voluntary organisations.

The report focuses primarily, although not exclusively, on Glasgow and the West of Scotland—those areas that came under the local government of The Corporation of the City of Glasgow (up to 1975) and Strathclyde Regional Council (1975-1996). Throughout the period under consideration, Glasgow was the Scottish local authority with by far the largest number of children in its care and in care. Greater Glasgow and its hinterland (Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire) were also the location for some of the largest and most well-known voluntary-run children's homes, including Quarrier's Homes at Bridge of Weir in Renfrewshire and Smyllum Orphanage in Lanarkshire. However, the investigation is not confined to this locale. Many of the homes run by Glasgow Corporation were situated beyond the city boundaries. Children were boarded out from Glasgow to locations across Scotland and some major childcare providers were located elsewhere (notably Aberlour Orphanage in Moray). Where relevant, other local authorities are included in the research to offer the opportunity for comparison and to identify commonalities and differences in the ways in which local authorities discharged their duties under the legislation.

The report covers the following areas:

- It describes the systems and structures that existed at national (Scottish Office) and local authority levels to regulate the care of children who could not be looked after by their birth families. Legislation and regulations governing the structures and processes pertaining to the care of these children are referred to only in as much as they provide the context for practice at the level of the state (Scottish Office) and local authority. Full description of this legislation is already provided by Professor Kenneth Norrie's report for the Inquiry.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> K. McK. Norrie, *Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young People Living Apart from their Parents* (Edinburgh, 2017).

- It cites the implementation of policies and procedures at the Scottish Office (Scottish Education and Home Departments) and by local authorities and identifies how and to what extent the regulatory mechanisms were executed in practice in relation to each form of care provision (boarding out, local authority residential care, voluntary residential care and, following the enactment of the 1968 Social Work Act, the widespread practice of placing of children under supervision within their own homes). It also examines the effectiveness of communication and operational practices between those parties responsible for children's care and protection.
- It discusses the dominant attitudes expressed towards children in care by those responsible for their wellbeing across the period c.1948-c.1995 and identifies change where and when it occurred.
- It provides information about how appropriate qualifications and the training of staff was planned for and implemented by the Scottish Office and local authorities in respect of childcare officers, field staff and residential care workers across the period.
- And finally, the report assesses the effectiveness of the state in its responses to intimations of mistreatment and abuse from children themselves, inspectors or third parties.

## Methodology

### The historical record: summary of materials consulted

This investigation into the day-to-day workings of the historic childcare system in Scotland has required consultation of historic written records created by the relevant authorities at the Scottish Office (primarily Home and Education Departments) and Local Government Children's Departments (1948-c.1969), Social Work Departments, and Education Departments (primarily, though not exclusively, Glasgow Corporation and its successor, Strathclyde Regional Council). We have also consulted records created by voluntary organisations providing child care, namely Smyllum Orphanage, Quarrier's Homes, Aberlour Orphanage, Barnardo's, Church of Scotland Homes, and residential establishments operated by several other smaller providers in Scotland. We also conducted some searches of online newspapers in order to access information not otherwise available in the official record.

- a) Records relating to children in care created by Scottish Office: Home (until 1960) and Education Departments (from 1960); and by the Social Work Services Group, which was based within the Education Department from 1967.

Scottish Office documents are held by the National Records of Scotland (NRS), Edinburgh for the period 1948-1995. These record Scottish Office considerations of policy and practice and comprise, *inter alia*, the record of civil service actions, reports of inspection visits to children's homes and residential schools by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI); communications between Scottish Office and UK Government, Scottish local authorities, professional bodies, local authority umbrella organisations, and charitable organisations focused on child welfare e.g. the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (RSSPCC). These records also contain reports issued by the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care, and such reports often generated huge amounts of correspondence and resulting circulars which were addressed to childcare providers. Many of the files in this category are still closed. We have had access, having signed confidentiality and disclosure agreements with both the NRS and the Inquiry.

b) Records created by local authority bodies (primarily here Glasgow Corporation Children's Department, Strathclyde Regional Council and Glasgow City Council Social Work Departments all held at Glasgow City Archives) relating to children in care within their jurisdiction.<sup>2</sup>

They include: Glasgow Corporation Children's Committee minutes of meetings; Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department records focusing on staffing and training; policy documents in relation to child care; a limited number of records created by children's homes; and a large amount of correspondence in respect of child care. These records provide some evidence of the day-to-day management of children's services in Scotland's largest local authority, but the record is by no means comprehensive. It is important to note that these records are partial in that not all written records of all meetings of committees are extant or available. For instance, while minutes of all meetings of the Corporation Children's Committee are available for consultation, minutes of sub committees (such as the subcommittee on boarding out) do not seem to have survived or were not traceable for this research. Likewise, relatively few records in the form of log books, visitor books, punishment records, and similar documents, which might provide an impression of the day-to-day running of individual children's homes managed

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<sup>2</sup> The authors would like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance with this research of Dr Irene O'Brien, senior archivist, Glasgow City Archives and members of archive staff.

by Glasgow local authority, survive. Glasgow was chosen for particular focus here because of its size. It should not be regarded as representative of local authority policy and practice with regards to childcare more widely across Scotland.

c) Children's case files.

Glasgow Corporation and subsequently Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department maintained an individual case file for every child brought into the care of the local authority, whether for a short or long period. Those accessed for this research were provided via Glasgow City Archives. We sampled case files according to the date of birth of the child in order to survey the system and children's experience of it across the period in question. Because of the nature of how these files are archived, the small sample selected for in-depth interrogation for this research *cannot be described as in any way representative*. For example, this random sample by birth date did not turn up any cases in which children were boarded out long term post-1960s, and only a handful of such cases where the child was boarded (often unsuccessfully) for a few weeks. What this type of random sampling does provide, however, is a snapshot view of the increased weight of administration for social workers and children's/social work departments over time. And from the 1960s onwards, it indicates the likely sharp decline of the use of residential children's homes for long-term care, the abandonment of foster care as the first line pathway for children brought to the attention of departments, and the multiple types of assistance given to some children and their families by social workers—often over many years.

Case files from the period before the Social Work Act are considerably briefer than those following the Act when much fuller accounts were provided running to, sometimes, hundreds of pages. The case file details the child's journey through the care system until placed 'out of care' or discharged from the care system at the age of 18 years.<sup>3</sup> The files contain information on the child's background including parents and their occupations, place of residence, schooling, and so on; why the child was taken into care and thereafter where they were placed; when and how their care was reviewed and the comments of the childcare officer; any payment made by the parent as a

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<sup>3</sup> Very occasionally, a child might remain in the care of the local authority beyond 18 years old if they were still in education or a formal training programme.

financial contribution to the cost of care; any health issues experienced by the child; arrangements made for aftercare and employment; and finally the date of discharge. These records provide an indispensable insight into the operation of local authority care, the relationship between local authorities and voluntary institutions, attitudes towards children in care by local officials, carers and guardians, and others involved with the child such as teachers and health care professionals. These files are all closed due to data protection. We have had access to the files having agreed to maintain strict confidentiality. The case files of children in the care of voluntary providers who were not placed by the local authority are still held by those voluntary organisations and we have not consulted these for the purposes of this report.

#### d) Newspapers

We conducted some searches of online newspapers to access press reports of prosecutions for abuse of children and reports of issues concerning children's homes.

It is important to note that although we have endeavoured to consult a wide range of existing records, we have not consulted everything that survives in archival repositories. Some records have been sampled (children's case files are voluminous, and we randomly sampled a selection of these guided by the child's date of birth) and some have not been located at all (for instance, local authority inspection reports for residential homes after c.1970).

### Confidentiality

Many of the files consulted for this research are 'closed', that is, they have not been made available by archives for public consultation on account of the highly sensitive and confidential material contained within them that might identify individuals, either children in care and the immediate family members or adults responsible for their care and their descendants. Where we have had access to these unredacted closed files, we have signed an undertaking not to reveal any identifying information. Footnote references to these files are clearly identified as closed.

### The possibilities and limitations of the historical records

Historical records can be immensely revealing of attitudes, drivers of policy, ways of working and so on, and they often provide the granular detail of day-to-day management of childcare from policy making at the Scottish Office to an individual child's experience. At the same time the records can conceal as much as they reveal

and pose a number of challenges to the historian. In particular, there are difficulties for the historian in identifying relevant and useful records held by large local authority archives.<sup>4</sup>

It is also important to emphasise that historical records are subject to legislative ruling and government, local authority, and institutional policies and practices on retention, preservation, and access. The records extant in Scotland at all three levels—Scottish Office, local authority, and private institution—are voluminous but they are not comprehensive. That is, not all records that were created have been preserved. Many have not survived (owing to weeding, loss, or destruction) or are difficult to locate. It is also clear that negligence regarding required record-keeping did exist at many levels, and this is reflected in some surviving records. Access to records (particularly to those records hitherto ‘closed’ to public scrutiny and those in the hands of voluntary organisations) also poses barriers to knowledge.

The Children Act of 1948 determined that all local authorities should have a statutory Children’s Committee and a dedicated Children’s Department headed by a Children’s Officer. In the case of Glasgow, for example, the minutes of regular meetings of the city’s Children’s Committee are available and clearly detail the incorporation of such legislative innovation and the business that this proceeded to generate.<sup>5</sup> Such high level records contain references to other sub-committees and procedures within the remit of Children’s Services including, for example, visitations by committee members to children’s homes (both voluntary and local-authority managed) and appeals for access to children by parents—all of which instigated reports that were submitted to the main Committee. But the lower-level records that might provide helpful insights into the operation of services are not included in the existing, extensive documentary record of the Committee. Indeed, it is very doubtful, whether this type of operational record has escaped routine destruction. There is no helpful category of record that contains all the remaining documents of the Glasgow Children’s Department during its existence between 1948 and c.1970. While Glasgow City Archives do an excellent job of preserving that which survives of the

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<sup>4</sup> The researchers would here like to express our thanks to Dr Irene O’Brien, Senior Archivist at Glasgow City Archives and the staff of this archive for their invaluable assistance with identifying many relevant records.

<sup>5</sup> Glasgow City Archives (hereafter GCA): Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, shelfmark: C1. The inaugural meeting of the Children’s Committee was held on 27th August 1948 and contained in Vol. C1/3/118, Corporation Minutes, May 1948–Nov 1948.



documentary record of this local authority's history, our consultation of these records is constrained by that which is preserved and identifiable.

In some instances, the creators of written records recorded a version of events for the public record (in committee minutes, for example) that may not reflect in full the nuances and complications of the ways in which decisions were taken. There are two exceptions to this. First, children's case files, which often contain not only records of visits by the childcare officer but also comments on the child's demeanour and behaviour by the officer and others involved in the child's care providing insights into attitudes towards looked after children. Second, the minute pages of Scottish Office files which record the internal conversations—sometimes relatively unguarded—between government officials.

However, even children's case files can be surprisingly scant in the information they provide. For example, these files rarely offer insights into why a child was placed within a particular institution or boarding-out home and visits made by officials frequently elicit no more than a couple of sentences indicating that the childcare officer had called, and whether or not he or she had been accompanied by elected members of the Children's Committee. Whether such visits were routine or made because of particular issues raised about the child's care, can only be inferred. Therefore, reading between the lines is often necessary to discern what has not been recorded.

Perhaps most importantly, in all the official historical records we have consulted, the authentic child's voice is invariably not present. When children's voices are reported they are done so second-hand (via an adult, invariably someone who has a position of power in relation to the child—a childcare officer, care provider, guardian, teacher etc.) and so should be treated with caution. The written historical record is overwhelmingly the record of what adults have done on behalf of, and for, children, and created by workers who were not impartial advocates.

Nonetheless, the written historical record *does* provide a depth and granularity of information regarding childcare practice on the ground and demonstrates that regulatory regimes cannot always be assumed to have been implemented to the letter of the law. The approach in what follows is to feature a series of case studies interspersed throughout the analysis, each of which demonstrates salient elements of the childcare regime as it affected children in the post-war period. These case studies are not chosen for their typicality (there is likely no typical case) but they hopefully provide a series of acute insights into how the system of care for children outwith their natural families was managed by those responsible, how effective were the

systems in place to protect children from mistreatment and abuse, and how children themselves experienced the care they received.

#### Evidence of abuse in the historical record

The written historical record reveals much about how children were treated in the care system by means of the evidence it provides of dominant attitudes towards children in care and about the practical steps taken to look after children. But the absence of children's voices in the historical written record is a barrier to knowing about the existence, extent, and response to abuse in the past. There are several points to make here.

a) The modes of recording children's experience, opinions, and wellbeing (for instance, inspectors' reports of those who were boarded out) are generally sketchy, especially before the Social Work (Scotland) Act, 1968, and on occasion, opaque (that is, they may allude to the mistreatment of a child but are reluctant to spell it out). A fuller discussion of the issues arising from these records appears in Section 6.

b) The systems and practices employed by local authorities and the Scottish Office to regulate childcare did not facilitate an environment in which children were likely to reveal mistreatment or abuse whilst they were in care.<sup>6</sup> This is not to say, however, that children did not disclose abuse to responsible persons such as inspectors, teachers, and social workers. We have identified a few cases where this did occur. However, these instances are recorded very infrequently, and it is probable that some disclosures were not recorded. Where abuse and mistreatment were reported by a child, that reporting was more likely to occur outwith the care system, especially prior to the 1968 Social Work Act. (The provisions of that Act, particularly the assignment of a case worker for each child, appears to have increased the opportunity for children to report mistreatment or abuse to people directly or indirectly responsible for their care.)

c) Our assumption is that evidence of abuse was more commonly manifested in a number of ways, for instance via certain behavioural traits exhibited by children. These behaviours were apparent to childcare officers, but at least

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<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of disclosure from an historical perspective see Delap, L. (2018) "'Disgusting details which are best forgotten': Disclosures of child sexual abuse in twentieth-century Britain', *Journal of British Studies* 57, pp. 79-107.

until the late 1960s they were rarely interpreted as signals of abuse. Symptoms such as bedwetting, self-harm, theft, or running away are today understood to signal children's emotional distress. These indicators *are* present in the historical record, but may not have been explicitly linked to abuse or some other form of trauma by child care officers.<sup>7</sup> This may be because childcare officers at the time and certainly prior to the 1960s lacked understanding of the link between trauma and expressions of that trauma. Therefore, we have to read against the grain of official reports and accounts of children's behaviour in order to access experience. Where abuse was clearly reported as identified in the written record we acknowledge it clearly and where it was signalled or suggested by some other behavioural manifestation we note the suggested implications. Of course, in some cases, the very signals or indications of emotional distress became justifications for abuse of other kinds. For example, enuresis (or bedwetting) was most often treated as a medical problem and sometimes as wilful misbehaviour. The so-called treatment (or punishment) of children who experienced enuresis, which is now understood as one possible indicator of chronic anxiety, emotional disturbance, or trauma, could in itself be interpreted as abuse. While we have attempted to avoid making retrospective assessments of children's experience (for example, it would not be appropriate to ascribe all cases of absconding as responses to abuse) we are conscious that modern understandings of child behaviour, particularly in relation to separation anxiety and attachment and the long term effects of early years trauma can be helpful in interpreting past behaviours. These behaviours are rife in the historical record.

d) Intimations of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse in the official historical written record are few.<sup>8</sup> Where such evidence does occur is in local authority and Scottish Office responses to allegations, the press reports of prosecutions of abusers in the Sheriff and High Courts and in press revelations

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<sup>7</sup> Studies of child evacuation in World War Two did indicate that children exhibited symptoms in response to separation from parents and other traumas (although abuse was not explicitly considered in these studies) but we have not seen evidence that the research findings filtered down to childcare practice in the period prior to the 1960s. Moreover, the 1959 Boarding Out Regulations explicitly mentioned the possibility of children experiencing anxiety as a result of removal into care. Child Guidance was established in Glasgow in 1931, but served the Corporation Education Department rather than childcare services. For a discussion of the research see Abrams, *The Orphan Country*, pp. 170-81.

<sup>8</sup> It may be that a much more extensive analysis of children's case files would indicate more cases but that was not possible within the constraints of this research.

of allegations concerning mistreatment in residential homes. We have not undertaken a comprehensive search of such reports as not all local newspapers are available digitally, and thus those cases we cite are merely mentioned as exemplars.

## **Organisation of the Report**

In what follows we have tried to make the fullest possible use of a large number of records that exist within the repositories consulted. This report's contents are organised as follows:

Chapter 2 provides some historical context in respect of childcare. In section 2.1 we summarise the history of the childcare system in Scotland since the nineteenth century in order to understand the historical antecedents of the post-war system and practice. In sections 2.2-2.3 we outline the broader economic and political context to the post-war reforms to child care in Scotland and identify the very particular challenges after World War Two, especially as they affected Glasgow, the local authority with by far the largest number of children requiring care by someone other than their birth parents. The predominant provision for children requiring care is described before we summarise the impetus for reform and detail the system of regulation applying to all local authorities that was prescribed by the 1948 Children Act. Thereafter in section 2.4 we address the management of children's services at local authority level, focusing on staffing and training and lay out the responsibilities of the Secretary of State and local authorities for children's care under the 1948 Act and some of the responses to the new regime.

The remainder of the report is divided into two main parts. Part I (sections 3-7) deals with the period between the 1948 Act and the 1968 Social Work Act. Part II (sections 8 onwards) addresses the period between the Social Work Act and the 1995 Children Act.

## Context

### **The history of child welfare policy and practice in Scotland: a brief summary**

Scotland developed a distinctive child welfare policy and practice in the nineteenth century to care for the increasing numbers of orphans, destitute and neglected children, and children of paupers. This was a dual system of state (parish) and private welfare provision shaped by Scotland's uniquely traumatic experience of industrialisation and urbanisation, urban and rural poverty, and pattern of religious affiliation, education and legal systems. Coupled with the geographical and cultural divide—between the urban centres and the rural Highlands—these features structured a system of care characterised by the boarding out of urban children in the countryside and by institutional care provided predominantly by religious charities with limited state intervention. In contrast with England then, a child requiring care in Scotland was more likely to grow up some significant distance—geographically and culturally—from his or her place of birth: either in a rural home with guardians and often with other boarded-out children, or in a large, remote institution which sought to permanently separate the child from family ties in an effort to break a perceived inheritable chain of poverty and indigence. Some of the voluntary institutions also practiced child migration, which saw thousands of Scottish children migrated to Canada and other overseas dominions before World War Two. This nineteenth century pattern of care outlived shifts in ideology and in some respects, changes in legislation. Its legacy could be seen as late as the 1970s, particularly in the case of Glasgow, which still had a significant number of children boarded at some distance from the city and in large children's homes.

#### [Boarding out: historical summary](#)

The 'preference for boarding out' in Scotland that was identified by the Clyde Committee on Homeless Children in 1946 and continued to inform childcare practice well into the 1960s; it had its antecedents in the parish provision for pauper children under the 1845 Poor Law (Scotland) Act. The Scottish Parochial Board—the central authority responsible for poor relief in Scotland—was averse to placing children in the poorhouse, as it was believed this would simply perpetuate the alleged indolent habits of the parents. By the 1860s, urban parishes in particular adopted the boarding-out system as the primary means of finding homes for the orphaned, deserted, and separated children dependent on poor relief. This was a policy

affirmed by the 1876 Poor Law (Scotland) Act that laid down that 'no orphan or deserted child, and no child separated from its parents, shall be detained in any poor house for a longer period than three months.'<sup>9</sup> This meant that children were routinely permanently separated from pauper parents. Residential care was only resorted to for those who could not be found homes such as those assessed as 'imbeciles', or older children deemed 'unruly' who were more likely to be admitted to industrial schools for boys or girls, reformatories or training ships. Roman Catholic children were also more likely to be placed in an institution owing to the shortage of available guardians of the same faith in Scotland's rural areas.

Boarding out, a relatively inexpensive care option compared with residential care, was most enthusiastically practised by the urban parishes in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen; by 1910, around 90 percent of pauper children in Scotland (numbering more than 7,000 every year) were cared for in this way.<sup>10</sup> The policy of placing children in receipt of parish relief with guardians in families had a long afterlife, with Glasgow Corporation continuing to board out children, often a considerable distance from the city including the Highland counties and islands, until the 1970s.

Boarding out, particularly as it was practiced by parochial boards and then the Corporation of Glasgow, was justified on ideological grounds and conformed to dominant attitudes towards the poor in general and pauper-children in particular. Placing a child with a foster family many miles from kin and their usual social environment was believed to instil in the children all the attributes required for an upright, industrious life. The idealisation of the crofting counties as healthy, unpolluted by the sins of the city and populated by God-fearing, hard-working families, also informed the wholesale transference of what became popularly referred to as 'homeless children' from urban centres to rural parts of Scotland. From Dumfries to Aberdeenshire and the Hebrides these 'homeless children' were to be looked after by (in many cases) the rural poor, who came to rely on the income from taking in one or several parish children. The maximum number of 'boarded-outs' in any one household was supposed to be three, but some guardians took in up to five or six children, such was the need.<sup>11</sup> Very few guardians were found amongst

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<sup>9</sup> GCA, AGN 150: R. Brough, 'One Hundred Years of Boarding Out' (1959).

<sup>10</sup> Figure cited in Levitt, I. (1988) *Poverty and Welfare in Scotland, 1890-1948*, Edinburgh, p. 209.

<sup>11</sup> Children (Boarding-out etc) (Scotland) Rules and Regulations, 1947: Section 11. (a) 'Unless they are of the same family not more than three children shall be boarded-out, or allowed to remain, in the same house at the same time.'



children's wider kin closer to home, for these compared unfavourably with homes found in rural areas as one of Glasgow's inspectors remarked in 1883:

They are also exposed to the many evil influences and examples seen in a large city like this, and more especially in the crowded localities. The same healthy, robust, and cheery looks of the children boarded in the country is here absent, and a few of the children wore that peevish, languid look which plainly told the rearing up in a polluted and confined atmosphere, and the evil of too much tea drinking...<sup>12</sup>

Distance also ensured that 'dissolute relatives do not discover the child and visit it'.<sup>13</sup>

The boarding-out system was not subject to serious debate in Scotland until the Clyde Committee addressed the care of homeless children in the 1940s. Evidence to the Committee was unstinting in highlighting the defects of the system. Of note, the well-publicised prosecution of guardians in Fife in 1945 for the wilful mistreatment of two boys in their care should have alerted the authorities to the dangers inherent in the system.<sup>14</sup> And yet although the 1946 Report issued by the Clyde Committee sought to tighten up the practice of boarding out, its criticisms of the failures of the existing system were restrained, particularly in relation to the boarding-out of urban children on crofts in the Highlands and Islands, which it roundly rejected, ultimately allowing local authorities to continue with this favoured system of care. This was done as it was believed that a family upbringing was always preferable to care in an institution.<sup>15</sup> This preference was also enshrined in the Children Act (1948) which provided that:

a local authority shall discharge their duty to provide accommodation and maintenance for a child in their care—

(a) by boarding him out [...] or

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<sup>12</sup> GCA, D-HEW 24/1: Barony Parish Visitation Reports for 1883.

<sup>13</sup> British Parliamentary Papers (BPP), 1896, Cmd.8032, p. 713.

<sup>14</sup> This case concerned a married couple, Mr and Mrs John Walton who were found guilty at the High Court in Dundee in August 1945 of the ill treatment of two boys in their care. [REDACTED] (12) and [REDACTED] (10) were severely beaten over a period of months with the younger child left seriously traumatised by his ordeal. They received prison sentences of 12 months for Mrs Walton and nine months for John Walton. See numerous press articles including The Scotsman 4 August 1945, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> BPP., Report of the Committee on Homeless Children (Scotland) 1946 (Clyde Report), Cmd.6911. Hereafter 'Clyde Report'.

(b) where it is not practicable or desirable for the time being to make arrangements for boarding-out, by maintaining the child in a home provided under this Part of this Act or by placing him in a voluntary home the managers of which are willing to receive him.<sup>16</sup>

As Norrie notes, 'the continued preference for boarding out post 1948 needs, therefore, to be seen within the context of repeated warnings of misuse of the system, but these fears do not appear to have been directly addressed in legislation.'<sup>17</sup>

For this reason, the numbers of children boarded out constituted the majority of the total number of children in the care system in Scotland until the 1950s (see Appendix). While many voices urged authorities to place children in foster homes, where they might have the opportunity to complete their education and have access to a range of employment opportunities upon discharge from care, in practice city authorities like Glasgow were unable to find appropriate foster homes nearby. They thus continued to rely on a network of guardians in the rural counties established before the Second World War, albeit many of whom were now elderly. One result was the failure to give these children a better start in life.

As we shall explore in what follows, aftercare for children was inconsistent and in many instances, almost non-existent, and the majority of those who had been boarded out found employment in unskilled occupations. Or as one former boarded-out individual put it: 'we were all denied whatever chance we might have had to follow what we wanted to do.'<sup>18</sup> In practice, this meant farm work, labouring, or the merchant navy for boys, and domestic service or other unskilled work for girls.

A major weakness of Clyde's investigation into boarding out was the failure to look at the system from the child's point of view. No child witnesses were called to give evidence, and thus the question of the child's perception of his or her status within a family and community was not addressed. Moreover, although it acknowledged that the standards for selection of guardians was often low, there was no serious attention paid to the potential for abuse in boarded-out homes. Clyde concluded 'that a good foster parent system should be encouraged' and made

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<sup>16</sup> Children Act, 1948, s. 13(1).

<sup>17</sup> Norrie (2017), Legislative Background, p. 60.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with 'Peter' (pseudonym) conducted by L. Abrams in 1997. Interview transcript available at Scottish Oral History Archive, University of Strathclyde.



recommendations that were designed merely to ameliorate some of the inadequacies of this system and provide some safeguards against children being mistreated. The main points put forward in the report regarding boarding out are as follows:

(3) That a good foster parent system should be encouraged as the best solution of the problem, as it is most suited to give the child the necessary individual attention, and scope for the development of independence and initiative (paragraphs 45-48).

(4) That the way to improve the foster parent system is to ensure greater care and discrimination in the selection and inspection of foster parents: that this can best be attained by more specialised qualifications for this work on the part of many officials of the Local Authorities (paragraphs 49-52,101).

(5) That a standard minimum rate of payment to foster parents should be fixed for all Authorities. Financial gain must never be the main motive for doing the work (paragraphs 53, 54).

(6) That the responsibility for the boarded out child should rest exclusively upon the boarding out Authority, which should be required to give official intimation to the Authority of the area of residence, with a right to that latter Authority, subject to appeal, to object to the child being sent to its area (paragraphs 58-64).

(7) That notification of cases of unsatisfactory foster parents should be sent immediately to the Government Department, which will in turn notify the receiving Authority (paragraph 65).

(8) That generally all children prior to boarding out with foster parents should be temporarily placed in a Home for medical and other inspection, and should only leave the Home after a satisfactory medical report is given (paragraph 66).(9) That, where a child is boarded out in the area of another Authority, the boarding out Authority should always select a suitable person in the vicinity of the foster home to report on the child's progress (paragraphs 67, 68).

(10) That inspectors should visit each foster home within a month of the child's arrival, and thereafter make a visit every six months, and periodically a member of the Children's Care Committee should be present at these visits. All such visits should be without prior notice (paragraph 69).

(11) That each six months a medical report on each child should be obtained by the boarding out Authority from a local practitioner employed by that Authority (paragraph 70).

(12) That all children, whether boarded out with foster parents or in Homes, should be given pocket money (paragraph 71).

(13) That after-care and the selection of suitable subsequent employment should be an essential feature in the administration of Child Care (paragraphs 72, 98).<sup>19</sup>

The Clyde Committee allowed Scottish authorities to continue with boarding out after World War Two in a modified form. Such modifications were enshrined in a new set of Regulations issued by the Scottish Secretary of State in 1947, and mainly depended on the aptitudes, skill, and diligence of childcare workers employed to oversee the boarding-out process and to monitor its success—or otherwise—as well as very significant resources being put in place by local authorities in order to recruit additional suitable guardians. However, there can be no doubt that in the minds of many local authorities, where homeless children were concerned, it was anticipated that business would be conducted much as usual. Indeed, in their annual report on welfare matters in 1946, the City of Glasgow confidently commented:

Following the issue of the Report by the Committee on Homeless Children, appointed by the Government and presided over by Lord Clyde, the Department of Health prepared draft Regulations for the supervision and care of Boarded-Out Children and these have been submitted to and considered by the Committee but, as they are substantially on the lines of the Regulations meantime operated by the Department, their final approval and issue by the Department of Health will not affect the present administration to any appreciable extent.<sup>20</sup>

#### [Institutional care: historical summary](#)

The alternative to boarding out was care in a poorhouse or a residential children's home (though it should be noted that the vast majority of children experienced some time in residential care, usually prior to being found a foster home). In the nineteenth century institutional provision for orphaned, destitute, and neglected children was shared amongst religious organisations and private individuals with a philanthropic zeal. All Scottish cities and most towns housed at least one children's home that accepted children from private individuals and rescue organisations such as the Scottish National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SNSPCC).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Clyde Report, para. 113, pp. 31-2.

<sup>20</sup> GCA, Corporation of Glasgow Welfare Department: Annual Report and Statistics for Year ending 31st May, 1947, p.ii.

<sup>21</sup> Renamed the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (RSSPCC) in 1922.

Children who had become dependent on the parish were much less likely to find themselves in one of these institutions with the exception of those identified as Roman Catholic.

The most well-known institutions of this type in Scotland were the larger-scale homes, foremost of which was the Orphan Homes of Scotland (better known as Quarrier's Homes) near Bridge of Weir in Renfrewshire. Founded by William Quarrier in 1873, Quarrier's Village as it was known, housed a population of over 900 children by 1897, rising to as many as 1,500 during the interwar years before falling off to around 500 in the 1960s. Of similar provenance was Aberlour Orphanage on Speyside, an Episcopalian institution founded in 1875 by Reverend Jupp, which saw over 2,000 children pass through its doors by 1914. Smyllum Orphanage in Lanark was one of the few larger institutions catering for Roman Catholic children in the nineteenth century; this was established in 1864 and by the close of the century was home to well over 400 children. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Roman Catholic providers also included homes and industrial schools run by the Sisters of Nazareth. Aside from these large institutions the majority of charitable providers were quite small-scale and local.

Other well-known agencies providing childcare were, however, latecomers to Scotland. Barnardo's, for example, only really established itself during World War Two with homes set up in Scotland specifically to accept children already looked after by the organisation in England, but who required evacuation from high-risk areas. After the war this provider of childcare established a larger northern presence with homes being set up in various locations across Scotland to receive Scottish-born children. The National Children's Homes (NCH) was yet another large-scale, UK provider, that also had only a small presence in Scotland with two homes, one in Lanarkshire near Cambuslang and the other in Pitlochry. Both were established in the post-war period.

More ubiquitous than these familiar childcare organisations, however, were a plethora of small, local homes situated across Scotland with specific remits in respect of the sex, age, health, and social status of the children admitted. These might provide care for children within specific localities having been endowed by a wealthy local patron or to groups of children who suffered from specific physical or mental disabilities. Added to these were charitable homes aimed at relieving the childcare responsibilities of defined types of families—women left widowed by men who died at sea, for example, or the children of respectable widowers. Others explicitly operated as reformatories and industrial schools, and within these were homes

aimed at groups perceived as needing special training like the so-called Magdalene Institutes, that claimed to rescue wayward girls and young women from a life of immorality.

Most of these voluntary providers, particularly up to the 1940s, were entirely dependent upon charitable donations and contributions from parents and relatives of the children admitted; though some did take children in local authority care under a boarding-out arrangement and therefore were in receipt of the boarding-out payment. In the majority of cases, care staff employed in such children's homes were unqualified and had no access to official training.<sup>22</sup> By the inter-war period there were at least 275 institutions for homeless children and young persons across the country, more than 100 of them located in Glasgow and Edinburgh.<sup>23</sup>

All of these institutions—large and small—were entirely independent of local authorities and not subject to any form of official inspection and regulation until 1933.<sup>24</sup> However, they were an intrinsic element of the wider childcare network in Scotland, often arranging adoption of babies, cooperating with the SNSPCC/RSSPCC and parish poor law inspectors and—until the 1920s (and exceptionally until the 1960s)—participating in the child emigration schemes to Canada and Australia. Indeed, it was only by sending children overseas, usually with the help of intermediaries such as the Fairbridge organisation, that many continued to accept children through their doors.<sup>25</sup>

It was not until the inter-war years that local authorities began to establish residential care institutions that were distinguished from poorhouses. By the post-World War Two period, Glasgow Corporation ran a number of relatively small homes within the city and further afield.

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<sup>22</sup> There was no official or formal training specifically for residential childcare workers (apart from nursing staff) until the 1950s when small scale initiatives were begun. See Section 5, 'Training', of this Report.

<sup>23</sup> NRS, ED 11/211: List of Certain Institutions for Children and Young Persons in Scotland, Including Voluntary Homes, Hostels, Orphanages, Approved Schools and Remand Homes, Scottish Juvenile Welfare and After-Care Office, July 1933.

<sup>24</sup> The Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act, 1932; for discussion of the effects of this which came into force in Scotland in November 1933, see Norrie, Legislative Background Section C, pp. 28-9 & 62-4.

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of child migration by the voluntary organisations before 1945 see Abrams, Orphan Country, chapter 4.

Between the 1880s and 1940s at any one time around 2,000 children were being looked after in children's homes in Scotland, although exact numbers are impossible to come by. And whilst some children in the care of the local authorities were placed in residential care, either temporarily or permanently, these institutions mainly accepted children from private individuals—most typically when a family was in acute distress. Children's homes thus housed a mixed population of children, some of whom were the responsibility of the state, but others who were not. And they were institutions constantly in flux, rarely having a stable population of residents as children were found foster homes, were returned to their parents, were moved to other institutions, or emigrated.

As with boarding out, residential care in Scotland was only subjected to serious investigation by the Clyde Committee, which was critical of big, impersonal institutions—though it took several more decades for those large homes to give way to smaller, more domestic units. Clyde recommended that the large homes be broken up, remote homes be relocated, and for all staff with responsibility for children's care to have training. The Clyde report issued the following recommendations:

(15) That there should be increased training in Child Care work and further qualifications possessed by the staffs of Homes (paragraphs 89-92).

(16) That institutionalism should be avoided and every encouragement given to the development of the children as individuals (paragraphs 86-88).

(17) That the present large Institutions should be divided up into smaller groups (paragraphs 87, 88). (18) That the children should attend a church and school which are outside the home (paragraphs 95, 96).

(19) That in no circumstances should the Home in which these children are housed be a Poorhouse or an annexe or wing of a Poorhouse (paragraph 103).

(23) That a Training Committee should be set up to prepare the necessary schemes of training and examinations for the staffs of Homes and for persons engaged in Child Care work (paragraph 101).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Clyde Report, pp. 32-3.

By these means, residential care was to be modelled on 'normal' family life and each individual child's needs taken into account. Clyde accepted that residential care would continue to be an essential part of the childcare landscape, both to accommodate children when they were initially brought into care prior to them being found a suitable foster home (primarily for assessment purposes to ensure the child was placed in an environment meeting his/her needs) and—for a minority of children unsuited to boarding out—as a long-term option. From the 1950s, there was a decline in the numbers in residential care, but nevertheless, this form of care remained a vital part of the overall system.

### Summary of the Historical Background

From the late nineteenth century then, an extensive pattern of voluntary provision complemented statutory poor relief. Indeed, the two systems operated hand in hand and between them established a network of care services encompassing children's homes, boarding out, adoption, and emigration. A child could have experience of the public and private sector, of multiple children's homes or placements with guardians and, in some instances, all of these types of provision. Until the 1960s, a child was likely to experience long-term care until discharge to work.

## The Clyde Committee

### Background

The work of the Clyde Committee was widely commented upon in the contemporary Scottish press. A survey of this enthusiastic coverage might give the impression that the Scottish public harboured serious qualms about the care of its homeless children and were eager to hear how matters could be put right. Certainly, the experience of wartime evacuation had rung alarm bells; yet at the same time, widespread public anxiety about either the boarded-out system, or the work of well-regarded providers of residential care, such as Quarrier's Homes, was not really much in evidence within Scotland. Such problems as existed in caring for deprived children in the UK that had made headlines were assumed to take place elsewhere, and those instances where Scottish guardians were found guilty of cruelty were assumed to be isolated cases.

The Committee was given two main remits in respect of homeless children. While public attention may have been piqued by its aim to 'consider what further measures should be taken to ensure these children are brought up under conditions best calculated to compensate them for the lack of parental care', it also had the task of enquiring 'into existing methods of providing for children who, from loss of parents

or from any other cause whatever, are deprived of a normal life with their own parents or relatives'.<sup>27</sup> And it was the latter revelation that probably came as news to many people and promoted the idea that at least some reform was necessary. While boarding out was accepted as the gold standard in care methods, how this system was managed was exposed as lacking coherence.

Following an introductory preamble, Part 2 of the Clyde Report describes the historic 'methods' and 'solutions' of dealing with this social problem whereby,

homeless children found their way into the hands of foster parents or into Orphanages or Training Homes by the efforts of relations, social workers, or of their own free will. There was no recognised system of inspection, and no Departmental supervision.<sup>28</sup>

The report then continues by stating that successive legislation had attempted to improve on this haphazard pathway but points out that this had resulted in 'an involved and overlapping picture'.<sup>29</sup> While 'three main solutions' had been adopted by local authorities—that of boarding out with foster parents, or within Voluntary Homes, or, in the case of larger authorities, by providing their own Children's Homes either in separate buildings or within a special wing of the Poorhouse dedicated to housing children—these strategies did not encompass all homeless children. Indeed, at the time of the committee's investigation in 1945, the majority resident in voluntary homes had not been placed there by any statutory authority but had been taken there by a parent or relative unable to cope or a minister or priest or officer of a child-saving charity. Furthermore, many children continued to be fostered under informal arrangements made by a parent. In the latter case, illegitimate children were particularly affected and—despite legislation aimed at ensuring supervision of these children by health and welfare bodies was undertaken—it had proved very difficult to enforce such scrutiny.<sup>30</sup> Smaller local authorities who did not operate their own homes might also be inclined to place children temporarily within Poor House facilities and in 'adopting this course do not even segregate the children from the other inmates of these Institutions. Occasionally, healthy children are placed in the sick wards of General Hospitals.'<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Clyde Report, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> For details of legislative interventions see Norrie, Legislative Background, pp. 16 & 46.

<sup>31</sup> Clyde Report, p. 8.



This overlapping of responsibilities and lack of uniformity in the care provided, is clearly seen in the ways that local authorities managed some aspects of childcare. For example, in Glasgow, children brought into Remand Homes were not the charge of the Welfare (Public Assistance) Committee as most other children in local authority care; instead, an Education sub-committee oversaw them. These children might be returned to their families, or they might end up in Approved Schools; but it was equally possible that they might end up being boarded out, in which case their care would move over to Public Assistance. Even more irregular—and widespread beyond Glasgow—was the case of children who were removed from their parents under a care and protection order. While Public Assistance Authorities were empowered to make suitable arrangements for the care of homeless children entrusted to them under the Poor Law (Scotland) Act, 1934, those committed to the care of the local authority under the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act, 1937, became the legal charge of the local education authority. In practice however, welfare bodies alone had the necessary knowledge of the boarding-out system as well as staff allocated to this task, and so it was they who administered the placement and ongoing supervision of all such children. This led to an anomalous situation whereby children voluntarily taken into the care of the Welfare Department remained its charge only until the age of 16, while those placed with the Education Department, under different legislation, remained in care until 18 years of age. All such administrative complexity resulted in a system whereby children entering care might come under the scrutiny of separate arms of local government administration including public assistance, health, and education departments—but conversely, a child might be under the scrutiny of none of these.

This multi-layered organisation was mirrored by the complex arrangements for inspection, with numerous agencies responsible for different elements of the system at both local and central government levels. At the level of local administration, inspection was performed:

...by the Public Assistance Authorities in regard to children boarded out with foster parents. The Poor Relief Regulations (Scotland) 1934 require these Authorities to arrange for the child who is boarded out with foster parents to be supervised by someone in the area where the children are boarded, *e.g.* the local schoolmaster, doctor, minister, or Public Assistance Officer. Under the Regulations every child must be visited at least once in every 12 months by an inspector of the boarding out Authority, who may be accompanied by not more than two members of that Authority...The frequency of visits of inspection by these Authorities varies considerably through-out Scotland... In addition to this, where children are in a Voluntary Home their welfare is supervised by the



committee of the Home. Where they are in a Local Authority Home they are inspected by the Public Assistance inspectors of the Authority responsible for the Home.<sup>32</sup>

When it came to inspection by the Scottish Office, three separate government departments, Health, Education and the Home Departments and their associated inspectorates all had charge of different parts of the scheme of oversight. For example, children who were committed to an education authority as a 'fit person' were subject to inspections

by inspectors of the Scottish Education Department if they are in an institution inspected by that Department; or on behalf of the Scottish Education Department by the inspecting staff of the Department of Health for Scotland (if they are boarded out) or of the Scottish Home Department (if they are in voluntary homes subject to that Department's inspection).<sup>33</sup>

Clyde described the system as 'piecemeal' involving 'inconsistency and overlapping in the administration', which invariably resulted in inspection failures with children not being seen by any agency charged with their care.<sup>34</sup> In particular, it criticised the overlapping of responsibilities for ensuring boarded-out children were well cared for (especially where children were boarded out with their own authority) and stated that 'all this differentiation must go', recommending that the sending authority retain responsibility for the child.<sup>35</sup> In all of this morass, there was a clear absence of checks and balances between internal and external inspection, which led, almost inevitably, to a situation wherein the welfare of individual children could easily be overlooked—not necessarily by intention, but by bureaucratic omission. The attendant publicity given to Clyde's findings revealed these deficiencies to the public. Though there clearly was regular scrutiny at all levels of the number of children in care, where they were placed and so on, there was a wide gulf between the structures nominally in place to ensure children were cared for, and the implementation and effectiveness of these. Arguably the attention of local authorities was on the management of children in their care rather than on individual children's welfare.

## Outcomes

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> NRS, ED11/275: The Children and Young Persons Act, 1937: Inspection of Voluntary Homes: discussion document written c.1945 entitled, 'Departmental Responsibility for Homeless Children'.

<sup>34</sup> NRS, GD 534/12/5/1-4: Report of the Boarding-Out Committee, p. 14.

<sup>35</sup> Clyde Report, p. 22.

Clyde identified the confusion of responsibilities for children's welfare and proposed administrative reforms to address this stating:

...the time has now come to sweep away the existing anomalies and to recognise the importance of the welfare of children as a distinct function of the Local Authority, and not as an incidental function of a group of separate committees of different Local Authorities primarily concerned at present with other functions. It is inappropriate to leave these children in the hands of a Public Assistance Authority with a Poor Law outlook.<sup>36</sup>

This latter statement was widely quoted in newspapers across Scotland, as were the reforms recommended, which were:

(1) That the functions regarding the care of children deprived of a normal home life, at present exercised by the three Government Departments, should be transferred to one single Department with a uniform set of regulations and a single staff of inspectors (paragraphs 40-42).<sup>37</sup>

(2) That the functions at present exercisable by the Education Committees, the Public Health Committees, and the Public Assistance Committees of Local Authorities in regard to homeless children should be exercised by one Committee in each area: and that the powers and duties of that Committee should be extended so as to give it a uniform jurisdiction over all such children (paragraphs 75-81).<sup>38</sup>

Described as a 'new deal' for Scotland's '17,000 homeless children', and as a means to give these juveniles 'deprived of normal home life, not only material care, but also a sense of security and status', Clyde's recommendations easily obtained public approval.<sup>39</sup>

Local authorities—whose jurisdiction was at the heart of the new regime proposed by Clyde—were less enthusiastic. Indeed, the largest authority, Glasgow (initially at least) largely rejected many of the points raised in the Clyde Report. For example, following a meeting held between representatives of the Home Department and Glasgow's Director of Welfare in December 1947, a response to matters raised at the meeting was sent to the Home Department by Glasgow's Senior Child Welfare

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., paras 40-2.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., paras 75-81.

<sup>39</sup> Aberdeen Press and Journal, 25 March 1947: 'New Deal For Homeless Scots Children' by J. D. Margach, Lobby Correspondent, p. 3.

Officer. It is evident that Glasgow's preference for boarding out to the crofting counties was a subject of disagreement when Home Department officials pointed out that this needed to be curtailed in the light of the Clyde Report. Glasgow's response was to stand its ground, and there was even an attempt to invoke post-war austerity in support of their plea that in sending children to crofts they had the welfare of children foremost in mind:

...the crofter's home has for many years been one of the mainstays of the boarding out system and it is rather surprising that the suitability of such homes should be questioned during such a difficult time as the present, particularly as it is true to say that the crofter's home is one of the few places where a child can receive plentiful supplies of fresh milk, butter, eggs, etc.<sup>40</sup>

This position is also evident in records kept by Glasgow in respect of boarded-out children for the year 1949; these detail the location of all guardians employed by Glasgow and the children who resided with them. This record includes the fact that three years after the publication of the Clyde Report, on the small island of Tiree on 1 June 1949, Glasgow was employing 50 foster carers among these islanders with whom were boarded no fewer than 66 Glasgow-born children.<sup>41</sup> Glasgow was not alone in showing resistance to change. In a debate on the findings of the Clyde Report, one local councillor in Aberdeen declaimed that the city:

...had given lead to the whole of Great Britain in the boarding-out system. "We are told that children should not be brought up on crofts. Some of our finest citizens have been brought up on crofts in Scotland."<sup>42</sup>

However far-sighted the recommendations contained within Clyde were, implementing them would prove to be a challenge.

A further key element of Clyde's recommendations that had critical effects on the future care of homeless children was that of staff education and training. The report was very clear that unless this was addressed swiftly, nothing would change, commenting that without an increase and improvement in the quality of staff working in childcare, 'all the goodwill in the world will not secure the result aimed at.

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<sup>40</sup> NRS, ED11/294: 'Homeless Children: Inspection of Boarded Out Children- Glasgow Boarding Out System'; written comments provided by H. B. McKay, Chief Children's Welfare Officer following a meeting held between the Director of Welfare for Glasgow—W. W. Ford and representatives from the Scottish Home Department, 20 December 1947.

<sup>41</sup> GCA, D-Hew 24/60A, Children Boarded out by the Corporation of Glasgow at 1st June 1949.

<sup>42</sup> Aberdeen Press and Journal, 8 May 1947: Bailie Watson at a meeting of Aberdeen City Council, p. 6.

The difficulty is that to-day there is no machinery whereby that improvement can be secured.<sup>43</sup> In England, the Curtis Report recommended that a Training Council was set up to initiate and approve training courses in childcare work; Clyde made similar recommendations for a 'Training Committee' (para. 101). However, in Scotland, the future of children's services diverged somewhat from the situation in England and Wales in this critical area. In England, in 1947, a Central Training Council was set up and financed by the Home Office. This oversaw the introduction of authorised training courses, often conducted in technical colleges. This did not happen in Scotland at the same time. North of the border there seems to have been a view that training for work in children's homes was vocational rather than theoretical, and not necessarily the province of institutions of further education. Scotland thus badly lagged in this area as there may have been an expectation that voluntary organisations and local authorities would themselves organise training. In an unsigned letter, dated 8th April 1946, sent to an official in the Scottish Home Department (SHD) and reporting on a meeting held at the Home Office on the subject of the interim report produced by the Curtis Committee, the following comment was made:

I expressed the view...that in Scotland it would probably be felt desirable not to divorce practical training from the theoretical training, and that indeed we contemplated the best method of giving theoretical training would be in voluntary homes or other institutions themselves. The general view of the meeting [was] that this would be very difficult to arrange since most of the homes in which the trainees would be doing their practical work would not be able to cater for enough students to make a satisfactory class; and in any event the standard of instruction which could be given in classes in voluntary homes would not be nearly as good as that which could be given in other institutions...their main instrument of instruction will be technical colleges or institutions under the Ministry of Education.<sup>44</sup>

Discussion of training in Scotland was left to a sub-committee of the Scottish Advisory Council and this was not organised until well after the 1948 legislation was put in place. The smaller scale of the childcare field in Scotland, as well as different traditions in vocational education, inhibited central planning in this field. This was a situation that would have longer-term negative consequences for the funding and availability of childcare training in Scotland, which thereafter emerged late—for the

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<sup>43</sup> Clyde Report, para 101, p. 28.

<sup>44</sup> NRS, ED11/276: Voluntary Homes: Advisory Council on Training in Child Care. Letter to 'Cunninghame' from an unknown correspondent in the Home Office, 8 April 1946.

most part not until the 1960s—and in a small-scale fashion that could not keep up with demand.<sup>45</sup>

One further obvious omission from Clyde was any discussion of child emigration. It is unclear why the committee did not address this given the numbers of children sent overseas from Scotland—albeit those numbers were declining by the 1940s.

## **New Legislation: The Children Act 1948**

### **Background**

The Children Act (1948) was framed to give effect to the recommendations of both the Curtis and Clyde reports. The spirit of Clyde was very evident in that the Act aimed to clarify and simplify responsibility for children in care. This was UK-wide legislation and as it affected Scotland, contained very few specific amendments; where these existed, they were included to meet the requirements of Scotland's smaller local authorities by enabling them to fulfil the administrative requirements of the Act through combining services across local authority borders.<sup>46</sup> The most fundamental change brought about by the Children Act was that it placed a legal obligation upon local authorities to look after children in prescribed ways, stating that henceforth it would be their 'duty to receive into care children who are abandoned or lost or whose parents are prevented from providing adequately for them.'<sup>47</sup> The Act also dictated the precise manner in which this duty would be administered.

Overall executive responsibility was assigned to the Secretary of State for Scotland, assisted by staff of the Scottish Home Department, except in the case of Approved Schools for which the Scottish Education Department retained charge. However, day-to-day responsibility for the care of homeless children was placed firmly in the domain of local authorities.

The Act, following the recommendation of the Clyde Report, also gave a clear preference to boarding out over other kinds of care which, as we have seen, had long been the practice in Scotland. In addition, as Norrie points out, it contained 'provisions for ensuring that the household into which a child was boarded was

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<sup>45</sup> Murphy, J. (1992) *British Social Services: the Scottish Dimension*, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, pp. 106-7.

<sup>46</sup> Children Act, 1948, Para 40 (5).

<sup>47</sup> NRS, ED11/393: Children: Explanatory Circular on Children Act, 1948 (Circular No. 6913), p. 1.

approved.<sup>48</sup> Vetting had already been introduced in Scotland via the Regulations for Boarding Out issued by the Secretary of State in 1947 and these remained unchanged following implementation of the Act. The regulations stated that local authorities had to ensure that the household was suitable: once again, the ball was placed firmly in the court of the local authority. The Advisory Council providing guidance to the Secretary of State was of the definite opinion that local authorities 'should gradually try to reduce the number of children' being sent to remote areas, which they viewed as being inherently unsuitable.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, if local authorities failed to comply with this advice, the Council took the view that the Secretary of State should intervene. This was a situation that was almost guaranteed to lead to inconsistency between the approaches of the central administration and those employed by local government. Local authorities like Glasgow depended heavily on the services of established rural guardians. In the case of Glasgow especially, support for rural foster homes continued. Ten years after the introduction of the 1948 legislation, Glasgow still had as many children boarded out to the Highlands and north east counties as were placed locally.<sup>50</sup>

Also in the mix of impending disagreement between central and local government was friction about increased centralisation of political power. The need for this had been clear during World War Two, but in the wake of conflict there existed a stream of political opinion in Scotland that believed the economic and social future of the country would be ill-served by continuing this course. The Children Act was only one of a rash of reforms affecting education, health and social welfare introduced after the war, which were universally applied across the UK. While most of the public may have welcomed these, they were received as mixed blessings by many local politicians and among the more conservative-minded as evidence of creeping 'socialist centralisation'.<sup>51</sup> New legislation had caused significant upheaval in local authorities and an accompanying attrition in staffing. Unsurprisingly, many authorities opted to redistribute staff from older departments to work within new areas of responsibility that remained devolved to the local level. This was certainly the case with respect to children's services. However, demands were made by the

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<sup>48</sup> Norrie, *Legislative Background*, p. 58.

<sup>49</sup> Report of the Boarding-Out Committee, pp. 5-7.

<sup>50</sup> For statistics on the areas in which children were boarded-out see, The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Ninth Annual Report 1957-1958, p. 12.

<sup>51</sup> Cameron, E. A. (2010) *Impaled Upon a Thistle: Scotland Since 1880*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 195. Legislation included the establishment of the National Health Service and National Insurance as well as reform of housing and education.

central administration about the qualities expected of staff employed as children's officers that included a high level of experience and qualifications. Such dictates from the centre were generally unwelcome by Scottish local authorities owing to both resource constraints and perceptions of central government overreach.<sup>52</sup>

## Outcomes of the Children Act 1948

### *Organisation and administration*

In August 1948, a Scottish Home Department explanatory Circular was sent to all local authorities in Scotland, detailing the presumptions of the new Act and summarising the new responsibilities involved. Among much else, this 16-page circular stated that: 'central responsibility for the care of deprived children, except duties relating to approved schools, [had] been assigned by the Secretary of State to the Scottish Home Department.'<sup>53</sup> However, this was to be managed via local authorities 'exercising their functions through a children's committee'. The circular made clear that the Act was:

...designed to ensure that all deprived children shall have an upbringing likely to make them sound and happy citizens, and shall have all the chances, educational and vocational, of making a good start in life which are open to children in normal homes. Legislative provisions however, can provide only the machinery for attaining this object. The degree to which success will be attained in giving these children not only a high standard of material care but also an atmosphere of security and consideration and a sense that they have a status conferring opportunities, obligations and grounds of self-respect similar to those of other children, will depend on the use which is made of new legislative provisions, on the active and imaginative interest of local authorities and members of children's committees and on the choice of the right people for the work of children's officers and their staffs, and for the work of caring for the children in foster homes and children's homes. The Act gives local authorities added responsibility and new opportunities, and the Scottish Home Department will be prepared to give every assistance to local authorities in the exercise of this responsibility and in making use of these opportunities.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> For discussion of how the new departments and children's officers were received see Roy Parker, 'Getting started with the 1948 Children Act: What do we learn?', *Adoption & Fostering* 35: 3 (2011), pp. 17-29; also Murphy, *British Social Services*, p. 31 where the author argues that a failure by local authorities to appreciate the need for professionalism in children's services, and a certain amount of complicity with this view by the Scottish Office, seriously hampered care of children in Scotland.

<sup>53</sup> NRS, ED11/393: 'Children: Explanatory Circular on Children Act, 1948 (Circular No. 6913)', p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*



Yet while urging local authorities to make the duty conferred upon them operate in the best interests of deprived children, there was also a plea made that ‘the separation of a child from his parents can only be justified when there is no possibility of securing adequate care for a child in his own home.’<sup>55</sup> There are two points of note in this document:

a) The way the Home Department interpreted the Children Act, as expressed in this circular, arguably established an ambiguity about who—the local authority or the Scottish Office—had *ultimate* accountability for the welfare of children in care.

b) While local authorities had the responsibility to take children into care, to assume parental rights over such children (previously they had no such right), to provide appropriate accommodation (in foster homes or children’s homes) and ensure that after care was provided at least up to 18 years of age, they were exhorted by central government not to take children into care unless completely necessary. And yet the Act contained no legislative mechanisms to facilitate what became known as ‘preventative work’ and central government were given no powers to dictate exactly how this should be undertaken.

There were also omissions. The Children Act did not adequately deal with the protection of children who had been placed by private individuals in children’s homes and who were not the responsibility of the state. Such children, who were accepted voluntarily into an institution at the request of parents or guardians or a local authority figure (such as a priest) thus continued to represent a grey area in terms of the supervision of their welfare. While the institution in which they were placed might be inspected by representatives from the Scottish Office, as individuals these children had no external oversight beyond that of routine, or as required, medical examination. They became the charge of the institution’s own governing committee. Furthermore, in cases where parents then deserted, there was simply no external supervision of their care. This was a serious gap that left such children potentially exposed.

Following the Clyde and Curtis Reports and the introduction of the Children Act, some efforts were made to encourage the provision of ‘foster aunts’. These were volunteers, often members of women’s associations, who befriended children who had no family support and, in some cases, took them out of institutions for the day

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 2.



or for short holidays. This initiative was to provide children with someone to confide in, and to give otherwise institutionalised youngsters access to ordinary family homes.<sup>56</sup> It was a scheme that was fully supported by the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care but was met with something of a lukewarm response from residential childcare workers who felt that this was often an 'outside influence' that disturbed children and tended 'to make them dissatisfied with the ordinary life' within residential homes.<sup>57</sup> For this and other reasons, such as volunteers too easily losing interest in a child if she or he proved unappreciative, it was never widely adopted and so was of limited value. Also, there appears to have been no requirement for the vetting of foster aunts or their family members.

The following summarises the key divisions of responsibility between the Scottish Office and local authorities as they are relevant to this report and the new responsibilities charged to each of them consequent on the Act.

#### *Responsibilities of the Secretary of State*

Immediately following the introduction of the Act, the Scottish Home Department produced a ten-page schedule summarising the responsibilities now placed upon the Secretary of State for Scotland and those designated to the local authorities, comparing these new obligations with the duties that had gone before under previous legislation. Comments made subsequently by civil servants upon this item, specifically in respect of the Children Act included the following:

Is it correct that the legislation places a more direct responsibility on the Secretary of State? It was originally intended that local authorities should exercise their own functions under the Act "under the general guidance and control of the Secretary of State." The Act merely says "guidance"; "control" was omitted during the debates in the House of Lords. We have argued that the Act

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<sup>56</sup> We have not identified the origins of this initiative, but in Scotland it was promoted by a number of women's organisations and records indicate children's homes such as Quarrier's and those run by Barnardo's in Scotland, did participate. It was recommended practice in reports of the Advisory Council, see Report of the Homes Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950) p. 15; see also Scottish Home Department: Memorandum on Children's Homes (Edinburgh, 1959) pp. 13-5.

<sup>57</sup> NRS, GD 534/12/5/2: Report of the Homes Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 15.

places the responsibility for the care of deprived children clearly on local authorities...<sup>58</sup>

This issue of whether the Scottish Office had a duty to monitor rather than direct would dog the after effects of this legislation. However, as the Act was interpreted, the Secretary of State took responsibility for the following in respect of provision of care for children:

*a) Provision of children's homes*

As we have noted, before the introduction of the Children Act, oversight of residential care for children was performed by multiple agencies. Following the Act, while it became the responsibility of the local authority to set up and provide children's homes that had the capacity to receive children into care, and hostels for the accommodation of working-age children, it was also the case that the Secretary of State could now *require* a local authority to do so. And all such accommodation had to be state registered (homes already in existence in 1948 were automatically registered). It was further reiterated in the Act that the Secretary of State had the power to make regulations as to the conduct of such homes or amend those already in existence. In the case of local authority children's homes, the state retained responsibility for inspection under existing regulations—although this was now to be performed by a single inspectorate. Added to this was an inspection regime for local authority children's departments. The appointment of a children's officer in charge of the latter had to be approved by the Secretary of State. In addition, the Secretary of State was also empowered to close an unsatisfactory home.

Like local authority homes, voluntary homes also needed to be registered with the Secretary of State and, similarly, the state retained the power to inspect and could also close such homes if they proved unsatisfactory giving 28 days' notice. Furthermore, if closure was imposed, the central government could demand that the local authority in which the home was situated take these children into their care and provide alternative accommodation.

With these powers it was imagined that sufficient provision was in place to ensure that homes were properly run and with such assurance, children's welfare would be

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<sup>58</sup> NRS, ED11/395: Homeless Children: Effect of the Children Act 1948 on the Responsibilities of Local Authorities and Consequential Effect of the Responsibilities of the Secretary of State; comment by unknown public official, no date.

protected. However, what this arrangement meant was that inspection regimes tended to place their emphasis on the conditions at large within institutions—the fixtures and fittings, provision of nourishment, heat and comfort, opportunities for play and so on, rather than on children as individuals and their wellbeing. Moreover, in practice, the Secretary of State never closed a home despite severe reservations about some.<sup>59</sup>

#### *b) Boarding-out provision*

In the guidance offered by the above-mentioned schedule, the Secretary of State's responsibility regarding the boarding out of children was vaguely to 'take steps to encourage and improve the boarding out system' and to widen the scope of the regulations governing boarding out.<sup>60</sup> As we have noted, new boarding-out regulations were introduced ahead of the Act in 1947. A memorandum to accompany these regulations was also drafted by the Scottish Office in 1948. This was based upon a similar document earlier issued to authorities in England by the UK Home Office. However, the publication of the memorandum in Scotland was delayed because of ongoing paper rationing and, in the interim, Scottish local authorities were informed about the main provisions of the Children Act. Since this information made clear that henceforth local authorities would obtain 'wider scope and responsibility' for children it was decided that any 'issue in the near future of the memorandum on boarding-out, would be...ill-timed...To issue now would suggest that the Department did not contemplate much change'.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, this memorandum was never published.

Of note also is that Home Department officials recognised that where Scottish local authorities were concerned, many effects of the Act might not be enthusiastically embraced. One official commented that to go ahead in these circumstances and publish the memorandum would be to risk the wrath of local authorities:

It would seem to Scottish local authorities, most of whom have found in recent years that the boarding-out system in its present form in Scotland is reaching

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<sup>59</sup> There is no evidence in the Scottish Office records that the Secretary of State ever closed a home. Inspection Reports indicate serious concerns about conditions in some children's homes such as in the case of Quarrier's Homes in the 1960s discussed in detail in Section 4.6.5 of this Report, but closure was never raised in the written records and the Homes were given the opportunity to make improvements.

<sup>60</sup> NRS, ED11/395: Homeless Children: Effect of the Children Act 1948, Schedule, no.5.

<sup>61</sup> NRS, ED11/389: Homeless Children: Memorandum on Boarding Out. Internal correspondence on minute sheet, 'To Mr Nixon', 20 Jan 1948.

“saturation point” that we were teaching our grandmothers to suck eggs. The tone of the pamphlet seems to me to be too magisterial to commend itself to Scottish conditions. On the other hand, I have been informed by the Home Office that the memorandum has served a useful purpose in England, and that the Home Office Inspectors have found it of assistance in their endeavours to bring the more lackadaisical local authorities up to scratch.<sup>62</sup>

Evidently, the Scottish Office acknowledged that their influence on how local authorities made arrangements for boarding out would be limited. The Secretary of State thus more or less handed over total responsibility for boarding out to sending authorities who could choose themselves how best to select foster homes. Moreover, the Scottish Office recognised that it would be impossible for them to oversee individual boarded-out children in the numbers that were envisaged in any effective way. The only role played by the Scottish Office in overseeing the welfare of boarded-out children was to receive notification from a local authority when a child was moved and to maintain a list of guardians from whom children had been removed on account of mistreatment.<sup>63</sup>

### *c) Emigration*

The Secretary of State’s consent was now required for the emigration of children in the care of the local authority. The anomaly here was that children who were in voluntary homes and not the responsibility of the local authority were potentially left without protection of the state.

### *d) Management of Children’s Services*

Under the Act, the appointment of a Children’s Officer by individual local authorities had to be done in consultation with the Secretary of State who had the power to delete persons from the candidate list regarded as unsuitable; and the eventual appointment made had to be approved by the Secretary of State. In addition, as we have seen, the Secretary of State was empowered to appoint an Advisory Council on Child Care.

## [Responsibilities of Local Authorities](#)

### *a) Children’s interests*

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> It is assumed this list was maintained though it has not been located in the archives.

Local authorities' responsibilities were widened in respect of their general duties in this arena. Not only did they have an obligation to receive any child in need of intervention into care for as long as this was required, they also had the right to assume parental rights over children who had no parent or guardian, or whose parent or guardian was unable to secure their welfare. More generally and importantly they had a 'duty to act in the child's best interests, to provide him with opportunities for development of his character and abilities, and to make use of facilities and services available to ordinary parents.'<sup>64</sup> This meant in practice securing boarding out accommodation or, where this was not suited to the child or otherwise impractical, providing accommodation in homes run by the authority or a voluntary institution registered to provide such care. Local authorities were also responsible for making provision for the aftercare of children under 18 years in their care, wherever they had originally been placed, and for assuring the welfare of children placed in informal fostering arrangements by parents whether 'for reward' or not. Finally, the authorities were responsible for undertaking visitation of children in their care, whether they were boarded out, in a local authority-run home, or in a residential home, hostel or school operated by a voluntary agency.

These were significant changes to local authority responsibility towards children. Much of the subsequent discussion by officials in the Scottish Office and in local authorities regarding provision and quality of care hinged on Part II, section 12 of the Act for it was within this short clause that the notion was propounded that the Act 'intended that the children should be compensated for lack of parental care.'<sup>65</sup>

#### *b) Provision of children's homes*

Under Section II of the Act, a 'duty' was conferred on local authorities to provide suitable accommodation in the form of children's homes, including for the temporary reception of children into care, and hostels for working-age children, provided these met standards laid down by the Secretary of State. In such instances, the authority was responsible for the regular visitation of homes and hostels they themselves administered.

#### *c) Boarding-out provision*

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<sup>64</sup> NRS, ED11/395: Homeless Children: Effect of the Children Act 1948 on the Responsibilities of Local Authorities; Schedule of Changes following 5<sup>th</sup> July 1948, prepared for staff in the Home Department, unknown author.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

As noted, the Act favoured the boarding out of children to foster parents over other forms of care and brought this task under the jurisdiction of a Children's Committee. Where boarding out in this manner was not indicated for a child and residential care provided by the authority not available, then children could be boarded out within institutions provided by voluntary agencies. In Scotland, this often affected Roman Catholic children, or children who were members of larger sibling groups. Further noted in Part II, 14 (d) of the Act is the instruction that local authorities must supervise and inspect boarded out homes and 'that the children will be removed from those premises if their welfare appears to require it.' This ruling applied both to children placed in private homes and voluntary-run institutions.

#### *d) Management of Children's Services*

In order to facilitate all of the above, the Act aimed to streamline the delivery of children's services by compelling the introduction of Children's Committees and the employment of a suitably qualified and experienced Children's Officer who in larger authorities would head up a department specifically dedicated to the job of overseeing the welfare of homeless children. In Scotland, this meant that all cities, counties and large burghs were required to appoint committees and a children's officer—together with sufficient further staff, childcare officers, clerks etc.—to assist the officer in the performance of his or her duties. Only in the case of very small authorities was some leeway given; this allowed authorities to 'combine' together to appoint a single committee (section IV, 40 (5)). The committees themselves, while usually made up of elected members of councils, had the option under the new legislation to co-opt external childcare experts as members: in practice, very few Scottish authorities implemented this option.<sup>66</sup>

#### [Responses to the Children Act 1948](#)

If the response of local authorities to the Clyde Report had been lukewarm, there was even less enthusiasm for the Children Act. Indeed, there was considerable resistance to the new structures on the part of some. In Scotland, only the four cities and the counties of Aberdeen and Lanark exceeded having 400 children in their care and consequently the smaller authorities saw no need for a separate administrative

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<sup>66</sup> Children Act (1948): section IV, 40 (5).

department to oversee childcare.<sup>67</sup> Even in respect of the cities, Aberdeen Corporation resisted the new administrative requirements and particularly a full time Children's Officer and separate Children's Committee, on financial grounds. They argued that there was insufficient work for a separate committee (Aberdeen city had 300 children in its care) and proposed to incorporate children's work into the jurisdiction of the Health Committee.<sup>68</sup> Other smaller authorities (Airdrie, Midlothian and Highland) similarly queried these provisions of the Act.<sup>69</sup> Some objected to the new provisions, particularly in the Highlands where it was felt that the Public Assistance officers of such authorities who had years of experience in childcare could perfectly well continue in this role combined with other duties.<sup>70</sup> In these, the concession that allowed authorities to combine services was equally thrown out, since, despite the relatively small numbers of children involved, this would have given children's officers an unfeasibly large territory to cover, often in very remote parts. Glasgow, while it accepted in principle the appointment of a Children's Committee, wished to have the power to refer administration of Remand Homes to another committee.<sup>71</sup> There were clearly power struggles at play with local authorities reluctant to concede too much authority to central government.

In 1948 the Secretary of State was willing to consider some sharing of responsibilities across authorities, particularly where numbers of children did not seem to warrant the employment of a full-time Children's Officer, or in cases where children were boarded out at some distance from their usual place of residence. Subsequently, the Advisory Committee on Boarding Out scotched agency sharing between sending and receiving authorities, particularly with regard to boarded-out children, as they recognised that this arrangement would encourage some local authorities to send their most difficult children as far away as possible. The Advisory Committee were in any case very much against the clustering of children in remote localities and

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<sup>67</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services*, p. 98. NRS, ED11/359: Children Bill: Proposals by Local Authorities for Appointment of Children's Officers.

<sup>68</sup> NRS, ED11/315: Children Bill: Question of Children's Committees; 'Note of Meeting with Representatives of Aberdeen Corporation', 25 March 1948.

<sup>69</sup> NRS, ED11/315: Children Bill: Question of Children's Committees—replies to letters from Airdrie (4 June 1948), Midlothian (25 May 1948); ED11/358: Children Bill: Appointment of Children's Officers, Representations (correspondence from Highland).

<sup>70</sup> NRS, ED11/358: Children Bill: Appointment of Children's Officers, Representations, 3-page note of a meeting held in Inverness dated 10 March 1948 signed by J McFarlane, Chief Inspector.

<sup>71</sup> NRS, ED11/315: Children Bill: Question of Children's Committees, note by Home Department official dated 30 March 1948.

adamant that the sending authority should have responsibility for overseeing their own boarded-out children.

It is significant that some local authorities resisted the new requirements under the Act as it illustrates two things. First, it shows that some local authorities were concerned about cost. Local government reform created upheaval; the employment of new staff incurred additional salaries. Second, it suggests some local authorities were unconvinced the new requirements would improve the system and the services they already provided, at least not without additional resourcing.

In June 1948 it was intimated by Glasgow Corporation that a Children's Committee was to be appointed in compliance with the Children Act and the new Children's Committee met for the first time on 27 August 1948, convened by the interim Children's Officer who was in fact the former Depute Director of Welfare Services.<sup>72</sup> The Committee was constituted by 16 elected representatives. The majority were male; there were only three women. The Committee met fortnightly. Whilst there is no surviving record of all the functions of the Committee, it is clear from the minutes that it a) maintained oversight of the numbers of children in care (in foster care, corporation-run reception and residential homes, voluntary homes, working boys' hostels, and those on the Infant Life Protection Register) and b) had responsibility for visiting children's homes and boarded-out children and considering reports on same. The Children's Committee also had responsibility for approving or objecting to applications to emigrate children in their care though the final decision lay with the Secretary of State. In addition, it controlled decision-making where access to children in care by parents or relatives was concerned. Many such functions were managed through the appointment of sub-committees, which generally met monthly (the records of these meetings have not been located in the archive).

On the surface, this committee was diligent in performing its statutory duties. Children's Committee minutes for this transition period indicate business as usual, albeit with greater attention paid to the need for the expansion of residential home accommodation and indeed the visiting of residential homes by councillors.<sup>73</sup> While by far the largest number of children in the care of Glasgow Corporation were boarded out - for example, in the year 1949-50, of the 3,234 children in the city's care, 2,072 were boarded out or 64 percent - in this same year the committee also

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<sup>72</sup> GCA, Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, Shelfmark: C1/3/118, May 1948-Nov. 1948, pp. 1379-183.

<sup>73</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Minutes C1/3/118: Meeting of Children's Committee, 7 Sept 1948.



actively considered the purchase of buildings for use as new children's homes and the expansion of existing homes.<sup>74</sup> The Committee minutes also record the preparation of rotas of councillors to visit boarded-out children and those in Corporation homes.

The transition from the former welfare regime to the new children's services in Glasgow threw up issues regarding the relationship between the Scottish Home Department and the local authority; this included argument over the appointment of a Children's Officer and the salary this should command. Glasgow initially submitted a shortlist of nine candidates to the Secretary of State, which met with the response that this needed to be more diverse and was 'unduly restricted' and re-advertisement was suggested.<sup>75</sup> The Committee responded by sending a deputation to the Home Department and, in the end, seven of the original nine were considered, indicating that the local authority had their own way.<sup>76</sup>

A Children's Officer finally took up the post in June 1949 and his assistant was also appointed. Neither had direct experience of the childcare system. The Children's Officer—Mr R. Brough—had a background in the civil service as a Higher Executive Officer at the National Assistance Board and his Assistant (Mr R. McLeish) had been Acting Cashier in the Glasgow Corporation Welfare Services Department although he did possess a Diploma in Social Study.<sup>77</sup> The Children's Officer was employed on the minimum salary of £850 per annum.<sup>78</sup>

In Glasgow the Act was implemented as the law dictated in respect of the administration of childcare services but very little changed with regard to the actual delivery of care of children. Boarding out continued to be the preferred solution and children continued to be boarded out at considerable distance from Glasgow (see the case studies included in Sections 7). The List of Children Boarded Out by the Corporation of Glasgow at 1 June 1949 confirms this with the vast majority located in the counties of the Highlands and Islands.<sup>79</sup> As the numbers of children requiring temporary or long term care increased in the post-war years, there was also

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<sup>74</sup> GCA, DTC7/2: The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: First Annual Report, p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Minutes C1/3/117, Nov. 1948-May 1949, p. 2936.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p. 3276.

<sup>77</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Minutes C1/3/120: meetings on 29th April (p. 3276) and 14 June 1949 (pp. 351-4).

<sup>78</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Minutes C1/3/120, meeting held on 29th April, p. 3276.

<sup>79</sup> GCA, D-Hew 24/60A: List of Children Boarded out by the Corporation of Glasgow at 1 June 1949.

acknowledgement in Glasgow that greater residential care capacity was required but even when this less preferred option was taken children were often sent to institutions in remote places. On the introduction of the Act over 150 Glasgow children were placed in council-run homes in Argyll and Bute, neither offering the benefits of a family life or located within the city environs, and others had been placed in Quarrier's and Smyllum, both situated in relatively rural locations some distance from the city, illustrating the pressures Glasgow was under.

### *Implementation: the economic and social context*

The recommendations of the Clyde Commission and the legislative change introduced aimed to improve the management of services to vulnerable children, but these reforms also had the ambition to change attitudes towards such children. There can be no doubt that the task in hand for implementing such widespread improvements was, in the main, given to local government, with the central administration providing a rear-guard action to monitor practice and provide ultimate checks on any inadequacies or misapplications. However, the legislative and organisation change cannot be viewed in isolation.

The economic and social context of post-war Scotland is germane to any understanding of the practice of childcare policy in the period following the 1948 Children Act. Whilst Clyde had made a series of recommendations to address the poor standard of care and the Act had determined new structures to manage the welfare of children in care, post-war economic and social conditions, particularly in the cities, militated against immediate improvement. The ravages of war had impacted on families' resilience as well as on the already substandard housing, especially in urban areas. Glasgow was especially badly affected. In the post-war decades (1940s-1970s) the impact of appalling housing—both lack of sufficient homes and poor-quality homes—seems to have been a prime factor in placing stress on families, sometimes in itself necessitating children being taken into care, either temporarily or permanently as a result of eviction or evidence of inadequate accommodation. It was not until the 1960s that serious efforts were made by local authorities to prevent children coming into care by clearing the debts of tenants. But the housing crisis also meant there was a severe shortage of suitable accommodation for children to be boarded out to in the city and environs, either temporarily or longer term. In 1946 the Glasgow Welfare Committee reported:

The housing shortage throughout the country has, as a result of married families continuing to live at home or returning from the Forces and taking up residence

at home, had an adverse effect on the finding of suitable homes in which to board children, and the Committee will appreciate that it is always necessary to procure new guardians in order to keep up the number of homes available as even the best of guardians become too old to undertake the charge of new wards, so that a proportion of homes are closed each year and new ones must be found to take their place.<sup>80</sup>

The following year the Welfare Committee was concerned about the pressure on its own children's homes: 'the demand on accommodation in the Children's Homes' was 'very severe' and had been 'fully utilised'.<sup>81</sup> So circumstances were not propitious for the implementation of the Children Act. Reorganisation of children's services in local authorities took place against a background of immense strain on those services in respect of lack of personnel, insufficient resources (money, estate, training) and a growing demand for those services, which the legislation had, though perhaps unwittingly, ushered into being.

Across Scotland local authority care of children had been supplemented in very significant ways by voluntary provision, primarily by children's homes, large and small, run by religious organisations and—as part and parcel of most of these operations—child emigration. Glasgow in particular was heavily reliant on Roman Catholic provision of children's homes in order that it might maintain its commitment to placing children according to their religious affiliation. Despite the requirement for local authorities to provide their own residential care, ongoing pressure on services ensured that reliance on voluntary agencies, if anything, increased.

The role of external agencies, notably the SNSPCC/RSSPCC, also intersected with local authority services and responsibilities. In Glasgow, for example, the RSSPCC was active in working-class communities, often intervening to support families by liaising with creditors, obtaining loans and monitoring families' ability to manage.<sup>82</sup> The Children Act did not make provision for similar types of efforts by statutory authorities; therefore, children were sometimes moved into care as a first-line response. As early as the 1950s there was a move towards incorporating the type of preventative work done by the RSSPCC into a more formalised structure in order to

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<sup>80</sup> GCA, Corporation of Glasgow Welfare Department: Annual Report and Statistics for Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1946 (no reference number).

<sup>81</sup> GCA, Corporation of Glasgow Welfare Department: Annual Report and Statistics for Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1947, p.iii (no reference number).

<sup>82</sup> For an insight into how this worked in practice see Abrams, L.; Fleming, L.; Hazley, B.; Wright, V. and Kearns A. (2018) 'Isolated and dependent: women and children in high rise social housing in post-war Glasgow', Women's History Review.

stop children being taken into care because of social problems such as debt and homelessness.<sup>83</sup> However, such early attempts to encourage the RSSPCC to work with local authorities to set up co-ordination committees that promoted prevention met with either an antagonistic or a lukewarm response by both local government and the RSSPCC. But in the light of continuing pressure on local authority services, the enduring difficulties in recruiting guardians and the ongoing expense of maintaining children's homes, local authorities did eventually recognise that investment in prevention work was the way forward.

The mechanism of intervention for 'problem families' was brought into law in the Children and Young Persons Act 1963. This paved the way for the manner in which the Social Work Act was implemented to create generic social work departments that incorporated childcare, rather than isolating it in separate departments answerable to separate committees. We discuss this at greater length in Part II.

#### *Case Study I: Child A<sup>84</sup>*

In order to understand how the Children Act 1948 impacted on the delivery of services to vulnerable children it is instructive to look in detail at the experience of one child who came into care just after the passing of the Act.

Child A was born in 1944 and was received into care by a large local authority—Glasgow—in 1949, aged four years. One year after the introduction of the Children Act, and in accordance with its prescription, this child was placed in a reception home because the mother was deceased, and the father was unable to cope with such a young child and remain in employment. Older siblings, however, stayed in the family home. This was a very common scenario. It was judged therefore that this child needed care and protection that was unavailable at home, again in accordance with the Act. After several months in the reception home (as opposed to the maximum of a few weeks recommended), child A was boarded out to an established guardian in rural Aberdeenshire. He was not visited for seven months when, in surviving records, no remarks are made as to the child or the foster home. In line with the 1947 regulations however, the child was visited subsequently at six-monthly intervals until 1953 when the guardian declared herself to be too old to continue to perform her

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<sup>83</sup> NRS, ED11/405: Homeless Children: Children Neglected or Ill-treated in Their Own Homes—Replies to Circular 7497—Counties. This circular was sent to local authorities in August 1950; material in this file examines what responses to the circular had been by 1952—these proved to be disappointing.

<sup>84</sup> GCA, D-Hew 28/9/46: Volume E-McH. CLOSED FILE.

duties. The child was then moved to another boarded-out home in the Highlands and was visited here by a boarding-out officer two months later. This was to be a short stay of only a few months because the new foster mother is stated in records to have been unwell; child A and other boarded-out children in this home were thus moved on.

At this point, child A was returned to his birth family where the household income had improved, and the family had been resettled in a new council housing estate. Unfortunately, this was not the end of interventions in the life of child A by the Glasgow Children's Department. At some point after return to the family home and to a local school, child A was seen at a Child Guidance clinic and in 1957 the clinic staff requested re-admittance to care. Child A suffered from encopresis (lack of bowel control), was a chronic truant, and had repeatedly been involved in petty crime. When seen by a childcare officer the child was described as being 'dressed in very ragged clothes'. A payment for care from child A's father of £2 per week was demanded and when the father refused to pay this, care provision for child A was declined.

After this, the Guidance Clinic was advised of the situation, and arrangements were made to contact the RSSPCC as both 'the school and the Child Guidance Clinic maintain that the child is badly neglected'. There are only two further entries in this child's notes, which are not very legible, but from what can be read, the child appeared before a Sheriff shortly afterwards and was committed to an Approved School when aged 12 years old.

This case illustrates how the adoption of the Children Act made very little difference in the lives of many children brought into care in its immediate wake. Child A was sent off from an intensely urban environment to the countryside, and to guardians who were clearly too old and infirm to provide long term stability. Inspection, even when performed regularly, did little to avoid or recognise problems inherent in assigning children to guardians in this way. Moreover, recording of the child's welfare is pitifully scant. Then, when these placements failed, the first rush of enthusiasm for 'prevention' was in full swing and the child was returned to family circumstances after an absence of many years—there is no mention in this file about ongoing contact with family while the child was boarded out.

Although not recorded, it seems clear that there was inadequate supervision of the child once return to the family home was undertaken and, consequently, child A suffered years of neglect. This is a story of both parental and institutional negligence,

with the latter serving to compound the former. The story ends with the child returning to institutional care with admission through the justice system to an Approved School. All of the events in Child A's life were the types of circumstances that both the Clyde Report and the Children Act sought earnestly to ameliorate. For many children this was, however, the reality of their lives.

### Summary

The reorganisation of children's services was intended to rationalise and simplify responsibility and oversight of children's welfare; in organisational terms this did happen. On the other hand, however, the delivery of care changed very little in the short term. In Glasgow especially, in part owing to the paucity of housing and the poverty of so many of its citizens and in part owing to the belief amongst many within local government that Glasgow's system of caring for its deprived children could not be improved upon, the pre-Children Act pattern of care continued, albeit the provision of residential care was expanded to cope with increasing demand.

# Part I: 1948-1968

## Implementation of Legislative Reform

### **Effects of the 1948 Childcare Legislation on the Care of Children**

This section describes how the implementation of policies and procedures at the Scottish Office and local authorities worked in practice and how legislation and regulatory mechanisms impacted on the ways in which local authorities and the Scottish Office managed and oversaw the care and protection of children. We focus here on the period from the implementation of the Children Act 1948 to the passing of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. First, we describe how local authorities and the Scottish Office managed their childcare responsibilities (at the level of administration). We go on to discuss the effectiveness (in terms of protecting children from abuse and more generally ensuring they were well cared for) of the policies, structures and mechanisms that were implemented over this timeframe by the Scottish Office and local authorities.

It is important to recall the interlocking and overlapping elements of the childcare system that were still in practice in this period. The care of homeless and deprived children was delivered via a network of provision that consisted of: local authority residential care homes (including reception homes), residential homes and schools run by voluntary (mostly religious) organisations, foster care (boarding out), Remand Homes, Approved Schools, hostels, and approved lodgings. Any single child might experience a number of different childcare solutions across his or her lifetime.

### **Case Study II: Child B<sup>85</sup>**

The following case study illuminates a typical journey through the care system in the post-war period of a child who spent almost his entire childhood in care in a series of placements, some in children's homes, others in foster care. It serves to illustrate both the complexity of the system as it was experienced by one child and the difficulties in ensuring oversight of both the child's wellbeing and the quality of the care provision.

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<sup>85</sup> GCA D-Hew 28/9/52. CLOSED FILE.

The journey through the care system began for this Roman Catholic child in the late 1940s when he was a toddler and his parents separated. He and two older siblings were admitted—at the request of a parent who was unable to cope—to a Corporation of Glasgow children's home situated at a distance from the city. The child spent over two years in this home, which catered specifically for babies and pre-school children. Somewhat unusually, but in line with contemporary advice, he was then boarded out to a home in the central belt, though once again at some distance from Glasgow. This placement lasted for around six months at which point the foster mother rejected him, citing his 'dirty habits'. He was only five years old. The child was returned to one of the Corporation's reception homes in the city, probably as an emergency measure following a request for his immediate removal and a few days later he was transferred from there to another Corporation-run children's home. Around one year after the date of his first, unsuccessful boarding out, he was boarded out again with another guardian in a small town on the west coast of Scotland. So, within just over two years this child, under five years old, had been moved five times between children's homes and foster care. There is no evidence in his case file that much attention was paid to the child's individual needs apart from his religious affiliation when deciding on a placement. Child B was of school age by this point and all seemed to go well at first: the foster home met with the approval of the childcare officer and the Corporation's Children's Committee who were reported to be 'pleased with the home'. On a further two inspection visits made in the Spring and Autumn of 1952, the child was not seen and reports from the guardian that he was doing well were accepted at face value. But following a further visit, made some two months later when he *was* seen, and the officer was satisfied about his welfare stating '[s]eems [in] good health. Quite well dressed & clean. House clean and tidy. Beds and bedding good'. At this time, the guardian requested his immediate removal. She claimed he was violent to other children at school and was persistently untruthful. Instead of making an intervention in this young boy's life to support him and the foster carer, at the age of eight he was transferred to yet another different children's home run by the Corporation, once again at some distance from the city, where he was described as 'difficult and untruthful.'

When he was nine years old and now on his seventh placement, this boy was transferred to his third guardian—this time on a remote Hebridean island—suggesting that both parents had become uncontactable. There is no indication that any attention had been paid to ensuring this particular placement met the child's needs apart from the consideration of the child's religious affiliation. At this time records do not indicate that there was a system in place within the Children's



Department to vet such guardians from outwith Glasgow, who perhaps had established a relationship with Glasgow's public assistance services at a much earlier date.

Given the distance involved, it is perhaps not surprising that it was some eight months before a local authority childcare officer visited again, and when he did, the child was not seen. Thereafter, however, visits were regular—though on some of these calls the boy was only seen in school, not at home, and never alone. On one school visit he was observed to be engaged in 'basket making' and described as 'happy go lucky, no trouble in school'. All seemed to be well until suddenly, in 1960, the child, who was by then a teenager, was reported to be wetting his bed. The guardian could not account for this change and the children's officer reported that there was 'no reason for this apart from laziness'. Intermittent letters from an older sibling were also recorded at this time as having been a feature, and it was said that these upset the boy, but they had tailed off in frequency.

At the next inspection visit in 1960 the boy was stated to be 'getting a bit cheeky but guardian keeps him in his place'. No mention is made of exactly how such checks on alleged impertinence were managed. The child left the island at school-leaving age of 15 to attend a technical course in a Highland town where he was found approved lodgings. He was removed from the course after only a few months because of his poor attendance and disruptive behaviour when he did attend. Then followed a trail of menial, low-paid and short-lived jobs before a return to Glasgow, when the young man was found farm work by the Children's Department. This itinerant employment in rural parts of the central belt was also marred by what had evidently become a chronic problem of nocturnal enuresis. The boy was discharged from care at 18 years old, and at this time was in a fourth round of employment on different farms.

This child's history illustrates a number of characteristics of the Glasgow system throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Children were routinely separated from siblings, could be moved from pillar to post, from residential care to foster care and back to residential care; they could be removed from a guardian on the guardian's request (often when children reached the teenage years) without any routine measures being put in place to provide further support and prevent breakdown of the placement; they could be labelled in pejorative ways which could have implications for their care; and as they attained school leaving age (usually 15) they struggled to cope when removed from the structured care environment of a foster or residential home, often moving from lodgings to a hostel and in some cases to an Approved School. Child

B's experience appears extreme but in fact was not all that unusual.<sup>86</sup> Whilst not all children who entered Glasgow's childcare system after World War Two had such poor and disruptive experiences and many were looked after by guardians in loving homes, it was common for children to have more than one placement, to be subject to low expectations and to be cast out into a world of low-paid work with poor prospects following 'discharge' from the care system, and unsupported by effective aftercare that aimed at securing their welfare as functioning adults.

Also of note, is that Child B was, in the end, placed in a home which could not have been further away from Glasgow. This island was a common destination for Roman Catholic children. It suggests that trust in the tradition of sending children away was one that died very hard, whatever negative comments were made by the Advisory Council about banishing urban children in this way to outlying, rural parts.

Finally, the historical record does tell us that the oversight of the child's care by Glasgow Corporation more or less conformed to the boarding-out regulations with regard to the frequency of inspections. However, what is evident is that the childcare officers who visited did not always see the child and they always took the word of the guardian. The voice of this child is silent; we simply do not know if he was given the opportunity to express views on his care. There is no evidence in his record of mistreatment or abuse in any of his placements but the fact that this child endured the disruption and uncertainty of seven different homes between the ages of two and 15 may explain his evident difficulty in settling. Case records do not indicate that any of his carers or the child himself, were offered any form of professional, psychological support.

In what follows we will describe and assess the efficacy of the new structures and mechanisms instituted following the Children Act to ensure that children like Child B were protected.

## **Structures and mechanisms in place to protect children in the care of the state**

### Local authorities

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<sup>86</sup> There are numerous examples of children experiencing similar care journeys, for example: For example, GCA D-HEW28/9/46 [child b.1944]; 28/9/50 child b.1945. NAMES WITHHELD

Within post-war interventions for children, the need to streamline services was paramount. Accordingly, legislation made it clear that separate children's departments had to be suitably staffed with an officer in charge supported by adequate numbers of experienced staff.<sup>87</sup> Thus, in most local authorities, despite resentments expressed, the new requirements of the Children Act 1948 were adopted, and structures such as Children's Committees and Children's Officers were put in place after a period of transition from existing welfare committees and departments. In a number of cases, a certain amount of pragmatism was applied by the Scottish Office, and despite the misgivings of civil servants who had put faith in the efficacy of the Clyde Report and the Children Act, they gave way to some objections and allowed a few smaller authorities to employ part-time Children's Officers.<sup>88</sup> In other cases, authorities simply dragged their heels and continued to allow Welfare Officers to take charge of childcare among their other duties for some years following 1948, or, they employed former welfare workers to act as Children's Officers.<sup>89</sup>

In Glasgow—the largest Scottish authority—the new legislation was promptly instituted and this is recorded in Corporation minutes for a special meeting held on 21st June 1948 to discuss 'the functions of existing committees and appointment of certain new committees'.<sup>90</sup> At this, the Town Clerk submitted a report as follows:

...on the recommendation of the Special Committee on the reduction of Local Authority Staffs, the Corporation had agreed...that the Welfare Committee be re-named "Welfare Services Committee" and that, pending final re-arrangement of certain functions, there be referred to the Welfare Services Committee the existing functions which would be left to the Welfare Committee when the National Assistance Act, 1948, became operative, together with the additional functions placed upon Local Authorities by that Act...and [that] a Children's Committee be appointed for the purpose of administering the functions of the Corporation under the Children Bill when it became law.

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<sup>87</sup> See The Children Act (1948) Part VI, section 41.

<sup>88</sup> NRS, ED11/359: Children Bill - proposals by Local authorities for Appointment of Children's Officers, pp. 1-2. Table indicating possible appointment of Children's Officers in Scotland. Only four local authorities were deemed to warrant full time Children's Officers. Also ED 11/359: Note of Meeting with Representatives of the Scottish Association of Welfare Officers, 10 May 1948, which notes there were only seven areas with sufficient work for a full time Children's Officer.

<sup>89</sup> NRS, ED11/459: Child Care Arrangements in Motherwell and Wishaw, Inspectors' Reports, 1954-68.

<sup>90</sup> GCA, C1/3/118: Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, May 1948-Nov. 1948; Welfare Committee Minutes, 21st May-31st May 1948, pp. 1379-183.

Orders of Reference to Children's Committee as follows:

The functions of the Corporation under:-

- (a) The Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act, 1937, Parts IV and V.
- (b) The Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act, 1937, Parts I.
- (c) The Adoption of Children (Regulations) Act, 1939.
- (d) The Children Act, 1948.<sup>91</sup>

Thereafter, the Children's Committee was convened and following their first meeting on 27 August 1948, meetings were held fortnightly during the Corporation's calendar year (there was a summer recess) and recorded the types of routine business outlined in section 2.4 of this report. The numbers of children resident in children's homes was enumerated on a monthly basis in the minutes, as were the numbers of new guardians recruited.

Nevertheless, as we have noted, it was fully one year before a Glasgow Children's Officer was appointed in May 1949. It is clear from the minutes of meetings of the Children's Committee, despite the official blandness of the language used, that this appointment was a point of contention. The position had been advertised and nine applicants selected for interview. The details of these were sent to the Secretary of State for Scotland for approval but he deemed that the selection was 'unduly restricted' and suggested the post be re-advertised. The Committee was split: eight members agreed with this suggestion and nine disagreed so a deputation of three councillors made a case to the Secretary of State resulting in the Secretary of State's go ahead to interview without re-advertising. Some councillors still thought that the job should be re-advertised but the majority were in favour of appointing. The successful candidate (Mr R. Brough) was from a civil service background and was at the time a Higher Executive Officer for the National Assistance Board based in Hamilton.<sup>92</sup> We can infer that the Scottish Office hoped Glasgow would be able to attract someone with a background specifically in childcare but the Corporation guarded their decision-making autonomy for such a high-profile position. In order to

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<sup>91</sup> GCA, C1/3/118: Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, May 1948-Nov. 1948; Welfare Committee Minutes, 21st May-31st May 1948, pp. 1379-183.

<sup>92</sup> GCA C1/3/117: Children's Committee Minutes: 8<sup>th</sup> March 1949, p. 2936; 29 April 1949, p. 3276; see also The Children Act, Part VI. Section 41 for the powers of the Secretary of State in this area.

be able to attract such a person, a commensurate salary would have been necessary, but constraints on the budget for children's services had effects on recruitment.

The staffing of the Children's Department was of questionable adequacy. In 1949 the department included the following:

1 Children's Officer; 1 Depute Children's Officer; 1 Boarding-out Supervisor; 4 male Children's Welfare Officers (including 1 dedicated to after-care); 2 female Children's Officers (including 1 after-care); 4 Assistant Welfare Officers; 4 Children's Visitors (concerned with adoption and Child Life Protection); 1 Cashier; 1 Court Officer; 17 clerical staff and 2 Removal Officers. Making 38 staff in all.<sup>93</sup>

This relatively small number of staff was responsible for the whole gamut of childcare functions: responding to reports of neglected children, taking children into care, finding them appropriate placements, visiting children boarded out (including hundreds in the Highlands and islands), visiting those in residential care and reporting on conditions, recruiting foster parents, dealing with parents and guardians at the Children's Department offices in John Street on a daily basis, managing Child Life Protection cases, ensuring Glasgow's own children's homes were properly staffed and run, managing children's transition from care to work, and so on. Given that many of the field workers spent large amounts of their time away from the office, travelling all over Scotland to visit boarded-out children, it should come as no surprise that this was a department that consistently struggled to meet the demands placed upon it. This was not a unique situation. Dundee in the early 1950s had only one Children's Officer plus a single assistant to manage the care of around 500 children.

From the list of Glasgow's Children's Department staff members, we can deduce that some officers had specific duties, while others, especially in more senior roles, probably were involved with multiple areas of service delivery. We do know from a later operations and methods ('O & M') report, issued in 1962 that surveyed the workings of the department, childcare officers essentially operated in different spheres with some looking after children placed in country districts, and other supervising care in and around the city. The latter had to deal with the constant traffic of applications, the vetting of new guardians and the visiting of children

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<sup>93</sup> GCA DTC 7/2: Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: First Annual Report, 1949-1950, p. 16.

boarded in the central belt.<sup>94</sup> A further remit that likely took up considerable amounts of time was the constantly shifting population in Glasgow's Remand Home, which initially was situated in the city centre until its closure and removal to the east end of the city in 1955.<sup>95</sup> The volume of work is indicated by the numbers of children admitted to care. During the year 1955-6, admissions amounted to 916 children in total. The 1962 O & M report comments that officers who were city based essentially got no respite even when at their desks, '[p]resumably because of the convenience of the office to local foster parents, 'city' officers deal with considerably more personal and telephone callers.'<sup>96</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, two of the first major tasks that fell to the Children's Committee and the staff involved with childcare was to increase the numbers of suitable foster carers, particularly within the city, and to expand the provision of residential childcare. However, these two key initiatives operated within wider circumstances that were far from optimal. In 1951, the annual report of Glasgow's Children's Department reported that:

The demands made on the department for the admission of children are constantly increasing and a very strict and careful assessing of the priorities of the various applications is necessary to ensure that the most needy cases can be dealt with. Throughout the year, many instances have been brought to the notice of parents who are careless of their parental responsibilities and quite devoid of love for their children, and while it is essential to insist on the fulfilling by parents of their legal obligations, the happiness and care of the children must always be the Department's first consideration. Any abandonment or neglect is not allowed to remain unpunished, and a sufficient financial contribution, when children are received into care, is insisted on. It is a matter of regret that there seems to be no decrease in this type of case. Many of these families come from disused Army camps with quite inadequate sanitary arrangements, and it is apparent that unsatisfactory accommodation such as this is a real source of child neglect.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> GCA D-OM-24: The Corporation of Glasgow Review of Children's Department, (September 1962), Appendix B, pp. 9-10.

<sup>95</sup> GCA DTC 7/7: Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Seventh Annual Report, 1955-1956, p. 21.

<sup>96</sup> GCA D-OM-24: The Corporation of Glasgow Review of Children's Department, (September 1962), Appendix B, p. 10.

<sup>97</sup> GCA, DTC 7/2: Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Second Annual Report, 1950-1951, p. 6.

The crisis in housing across Scotland after the war, put Children's Officers in a situation where they often felt they had no choice but to accept children into care on request, or, in many instances, by assuming parental responsibilities when it was perceived that parents were neglecting their parental obligations. The Children Act stated that local authorities had a 'duty' to do so.

Added to increased demand, the legislative requirement to operate children's services within a single department dedicated to the task meant that this was a new landscape of care delivery, within which even a long-serving welfare officer might be inexperienced in dealing with the multiple demands of the role. The staff employed by many authorities must have been unprepared for the complexity and volume of work with which they were faced. In the year 1950-1951, Glasgow received over 800 children into their care but admitted that the total number of applications made to them was much higher; but either because these were 'not relatively so urgent' or 'accommodation cannot be provided', such applications were not recorded.<sup>98</sup>

It is clear that Glasgow's Children's Department struggled under resource constraints to serve the best interests of the children in this period and either resorted to tried and trusted methods—such as boarding out children to the Highlands—or acted with expediency. To take just one example of the latter, three children age six and under were admitted to care in 1951 following the arrest of their mother for 'leaving the children unattended all night, being immoral and a drunkard.' The father had deserted and the family and the mother and children were living in a squatter's camp on a former army site, one of a number around the city that had sprung up in the wake of the post-war housing crisis. The children were removed to a reception home in the city but were discharged ten days later to their mother who had received a suspended sentence and the family returned to the squatters' camp. Glasgow's Children's Department must have been under considerable stress to return these children to a potentially unsafe environment. The written record gives no indication of efforts to rehouse the family.<sup>99</sup>

While Glasgow's situation can, in some senses, be viewed as exceptional given the size of the population, smaller authorities also had their work cut out for them. In the burgh of Motherwell and Wishaw by 1954 the role of Children's Officer was being

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> GCA D-Hew 28/9/50: Out of care children born 1945.



performed by a former, long-serving Poor Law Officer.<sup>100</sup> This officer, employed on the minimum recommended salary,<sup>101</sup> had no other assistance beyond a part-time clerical worker, and the entire department was accommodated in one room without a waiting area for families who approached the service. In 1954, 94 children were in the care of this authority, 32 of whom were boarded out—most with relatives, though 15 of these resided outside the local authority area. The remaining children were placed in six different children's homes, only one of which was run by the authority and accommodated 15 of the children. As well as arranging placements, supervising all these youngsters and providing advice to foster carers, the officer had responsibility for 15 other cases of children being placed for adoption or under a Child Life Protection order.<sup>102</sup> He also took charge of collecting payments from the parents of children in the care of the burgh, attending court when called upon, overseeing the service provided in the children's home and reporting to his committee, as well as investigation of new cases brought to his attention. Information about this department is contained in reports of Scottish Home Department inspections conducted in the 1950s, beginning with one dated May 1954. In the report, the Inspector criticised the records kept for children as inadequate in respect of contemporary regulations and stated that the officer had insufficient assistance and not enough time to conduct field work or seek out new boarding out accommodation.<sup>103</sup>

The person in charge of child care in Motherwell had a difficult job to do with no real backing—his committee were said to be uninterested in written reports and there is an absence of recording for committee members' visits to children in voluntary homes.<sup>104</sup>

Within what was a very restricted field of suitably qualified and experienced personnel, Motherwell and Wishaw were exceedingly fortunate in the replacement they obtained four years later when this post was finally advertised following the retirement of the first Children's Officer, Mr Aitken, in 1954. Miss Jane B. Turner had formerly worked for Glasgow Corporation welfare services and from 1950 had been

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<sup>100</sup> NRS, ED11/459: Child Care Arrangements in Motherwell and Wishaw, Inspectors' Reports.. See also 'His New Post', Motherwell Times, 13 October 1950, p. 11.

<sup>101</sup> See Motherwell Times 13 October 1950; and NRS, ED11/426: Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care, this includes details of suggested salary scales (no date, likely c. 1950).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., Inspection report for an inspection conducted on 24 & 25 May 1954, dated 27 May 1954, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 4.



Children's Officer in Dumbarton and Clydebank. She had attended 'refresher courses' in childcare organised by the Scottish Home Department and had obtained youth club leadership training via the Church of Scotland. After eighteen months in post she had persuaded her Committee that new accommodation for the Department with a waiting room was needed and this was secured; in addition, she had a full-time assistant with previous childcare experience. She had also:

...reduced the number of children in care by one-third...There is now 1 girl in a voluntary home and 2 children in other Local Authority Homes. Motherwell has closed its own Home and the children there have been boarded out and returned to their own parents with the exception of 2...Miss Turner is a very efficient and conscientious Officer. She has accomplished a great deal during the 18 months she had been in this Department. She has introduced many new forms...<sup>105</sup>

It was said that Miss Turner had improved record keeping with a new system that included individual case files, made more than the statutory number of visits required by regulation to boarded-out children and was active in speaking to local organisations and groups about foster care in an effort to recruit new, local guardians for children so that institutional care, and boarding to remote areas could be avoided.<sup>106</sup> In the latter endeavour she seems to have been very successful, given that under her leadership only three children remained in institutions when previously the majority had been so placed.<sup>107</sup> This illustrates the importance of the Children's Officers' role. A great deal depended on the aptitude, energy and experience of the person undertaking this job, as well as the support they received from their local Children's Committee. In Scotland there was keenness that Children's Officers should have a combined operational role rather than a purely administrative one.<sup>108</sup> Yet, the success or otherwise of a single department being able to protect the welfare of children rested on the leadership of the person in charge, and more prosaically, on the relationship a Children's Officer established with the Children's Committee—it was from this source that sufficient resources to meet the needs of children came. This was a significant administrative responsibility in and of itself.

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<sup>105</sup> NRS, ED11/459: Child Care Arrangements in Motherwell and Wishaw; inspection report, 6 February 1956, p. 1 & p. 6.

<sup>106</sup> NRS, ED11/459: Child Care Arrangements in Motherwell and Wishaw; inspection report, 6 February 1956, p. 1.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> NRS, ED11/359: Children Bill: Proposals by Local Authorities for Appointment of Children's Officers: 'Note of a Meeting with Representatives of the Scottish Association of Social Welfare Officers, 10 May 1948'.

Across Scotland the abilities of local authorities to fully adopt the prescriptions of the Clyde Report, the Children Act and later Advisory Council reports were often hampered in the early 1950s. This was due to a lack of personnel with suitable training, a lack of career structure within very small authorities, and the unintended consequence of legislation that meant that in the first burst of enthusiasm for protecting children there was a huge increase in the numbers brought into care. In 1956, the Children's Officer for Lanark produced a paper commenting on this situation, which stated that in the early days of this Children's Department:

...reports began to come in from Police Authorities, School-teachers, well-meaning neighbours and citizens (whose interest had been aroused by the new legislation) regarding the alleged neglect of children and requesting that the wider powers of the Local Authority be utilised to safe-guard the welfare of the children arranging for their admission to a Children's home. Investigation revealed that these complaints were quite well-founded and, as a result, we shared the experience of other Authorities in having a rapidly increasing rate of admission...<sup>109</sup>

A study which demonstrates how the above impacted on the everyday work of a department was commissioned by the Scottish Home Department in 1959. Research was conducted by staff of the Social Studies Department at the University of Edinburgh and a report was published in 1963.<sup>110</sup> The study covered seven departments of different sizes and in different geographical locations and settings (urban and rural) across Scotland; and collected pre-prepared timesheets of work done each day over a four-week period. The individuals involved included Children's Officers, Assistant Child Care Officers, and clerical workers. The report also included detailed extracts from two timesheets of officers in different types of departments. These were provided as examples of a typical day on the same date. The study demonstrated that officers worked extremely long hours with much of the time taken up with travelling and administration. It was estimated by the researchers that the amount of time officers spent actually in Children's Homes or foster homes ranged between seven and 24 percent of their time, with the average being 14 percent, over

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<sup>109</sup> NRS, ED11/409: Some Notes on Preventative work in the County of Lanark Landward Area, paper dated August 1956, unknown author.

<sup>110</sup> NRS, ED11/756: Scottish Advisory Committee on Child Care—Training Committee papers: 'The Child Care Service at Work, Report Prepared for the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care by Tom Burns and Susan Sinclair, Social Studies department, University of Edinburgh', (Edinburgh, 1963).

the four-week period.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, the time spent with individual children and their carers was extremely short—often a matter of minutes—a fact that meant it was unlikely such officers were able to establish any kind of solid relationship with their young charges. Very little time—on average seven percent—was spent on prevention. The research findings also indicated that due to the nature of field work, there was an expectation that officers would work beyond normal office hours. The fact that this report was commissioned in the first place indicates that central government were aware that all might not be well in the service that was being delivered by these departments.

So in the decade or so after the Children Act, Children's Departments were having to cope with increases in the numbers of children coming into care, insufficient accommodation for those children, and staffing that was ill-equipped for the challenge in terms of quantity and experience.<sup>112</sup> It is against this backdrop that local authorities were working to try to ensure children who came into care were looked after in accordance with the regulations.

#### [Oversight by Secretary of State \(Scottish Office\)](#)

As noted in section 2 of this report, the Secretary of State's role in the operation and implementation of reforms was more to guide than control. How childcare was managed on the ground was the province of local authorities. The minister could create new regulations and, when thought necessary, issue written guidance in the form of circulars. In addition, following the Act's implementation an Advisory Council was appointed that undertook investigations and produced reports that might guide new regulations and the periodic advice issued. Certain other powers could be awarded by the Scottish Office: the organisation of courses for Children's Officers; oversight of the appointment of the latter personnel; approval for the opening and registration of new homes (plans for these had first to be submitted to central government); the award of grants to voluntary homes to improve their standards of care; and the approval of applications to allow emigration of children.<sup>113</sup> Thus the Scottish Office largely operated in an advisory and regulatory capacity. The Scottish

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>112</sup> NRS, ED11/756: Scottish Advisory Committee on Child Care—Training Committee papers: 'The Child Care Service at Work, Report Prepared for the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care by Tom Burns and Susan Sinclair, Social Studies department, University of Edinburgh', (Edinburgh, 1963).

<sup>113</sup> NRS, ED11/395: Homeless Children: Effect of the Children Act 1948 on the Responsibilities of Local authorities and Consequential Effect of the Responsibilities of the Secretary of State.

Office had no oversight of the welfare of individual children with the partial exception of those children recommended for emigration. Summary details of children's cases had to be sent to the Scottish Office by local authorities applying for permission to send children overseas.

Besides these responsibilities, the main arm of central government involvement in childcare was through inspection of children's homes and other residential care institutions and children's departments. The Inspectorate based within the Home Department of the Scottish Office was organised regionally and headed by a Chief Inspector. It was via this mechanism that the powers held by the Secretary of State might be brought to bear: an unsatisfactory inspection would have been passed up the chain of command (see Section 4.6.4 of this Report for a full explanation of how Scottish office inspection operated in practice). Home Department inspectors were given the power to enter children's homes—both local authority-run and those operated by voluntary organisations—as well as Remand Homes, hostels, and residential nurseries. In their work they also oversaw the operation of Children's Departments themselves. Visits to Departments and Homes generated written reports. There was no official schedule for inspection; a great deal depended on how much surveillance individual inspectors thought necessary. These reports were not routinely shared with local authorities or voluntary organisations.<sup>114</sup> Even written recommendations might not be issued. Instead, the advice given to Children's Officers and managers of Homes was often verbal—although the fact that this advice had been delivered might be recorded on the inspection report.<sup>115</sup>

Relatively few examples of inspection reports for the period between 1948 and 1960 appear to have survived. Central government reorganisation in 1960 saw childcare moved from the Home Department to Education (Approved Schools had always been SED's province and oversight provided by the education inspectorate) and it is likely that reports were weeded and many disposed of at this point. It is impossible to know, therefore, how regularly most institutions were visited in the period immediately after the implementation of the Children Act or have a comprehensive knowledge of what types of observations were made during this timeframe. The examples of inspection reports dated to 1954 and 1956 for Motherwell and Wishaw

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<sup>114</sup> It is likely they were not shared at all with the providers; we have not identified copies of such reports in local authority archives and there is no evidence that the SHD passed them on.

<sup>115</sup> NRS, ED11/612: Inspection Reports on Children's Homes and Child Care Arrangements: Procedure for Handlers 1962-1964.

children's services, discussed above, provide some insights into what inspectors might have concentrated upon in this period. Overall, this seems to have comprised of: how many children were in care, where they were placed, what records were kept in respect of individual cases (medical, educational and notes of visitations to check on the child's overall welfare), staffing and accommodation, and the efficiency of the overall service.<sup>116</sup> Another example is the Home Department's inspection of Clyde Cottage at Dunoon in 1955, a home operated by Glasgow Corporation. The report is just one page in length, outlines the home's use (as an institution for girls who had formerly been boarded out) and comments unfavourably on the provision: staffing was deemed to be inadequate, dormitories overcrowded, the diet 'unsatisfactory' and recreation facilities 'very bare'.<sup>117</sup>

After 1960, there is a much more thorough written record including inspection reports and we can deduct from these surviving reports that inspection was conducted again by inspectors with a regional remit and that the frequency of visits was based on individual inspector's recommendations. A full discussion of the inspection regime is to be found in Section 4.

#### [The Need for 'Prevention'](#)

Even as the Children Act was making its way through parliament, a serious gap in the machinery of its proposed reforms was identified. During the Committee stage of the Children Bill an amendment was suggested (by Dr Somerville Hastings MP) seeking to make local authorities take responsibility for the rehabilitation of families so that they stayed together and the need to take children into care was avoided.<sup>118</sup> This amendment was not condemned as undesirable, but it was resisted because it was considered inappropriate to the remit of a Children Act and more appropriate to the education, health and probation services which, it was claimed, already made efforts in this domain. The amendment was withdrawn

on an undertaking by the Home Secretary that, in a general circular dealing with the Children Act, the attention of local authorities would be drawn to the desirability of their using all their statutory powers in an endeavour to prevent

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<sup>116</sup> NRS, ED11/459: Child Care Arrangements in Motherwell and Wishaw; inspection reports 1954-1968.

<sup>117</sup> NRS, ED11/524/1: Clyde Cottage Dunoon, Inspector's reports, 1955. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>118</sup> NRS, ED11/401: Proposed Family Rehabilitation Service. Quotation from a letter written by MP and Home Office minister, K. G. Younger, addressed to John Edwards at the Home Department, dated 22nd July 1948.

homes deteriorating to such an extent that the removal of children became necessary.<sup>119</sup>

Following implementation of the Children Act, the Home Department in Scotland recognised that local authorities needed greater encouragement to prevent children being admitted to care. Circular no. 7947, sent to local authorities on 16 August 1950, concerned co-ordination of council services to prevent and intervene regarding neglect and maltreatment of children and thus prevent such children from being taken into care.<sup>120</sup> It encouraged authorities to appoint a 'co-ordinating officer' and set up 'co-ordination committees' that brought together representatives from health, education, and housing, as well as representatives of voluntary agencies—principally the RSSPCC. Co-ordinating committees were meant to share knowledge about the cases that came to their notice; for example, if a family were facing eviction and it was threatened that children might have to come into care as a result, the children's officer could relay this information among health, welfare, and housing officers in the hope that some measure could be put in place to prevent break-up of the family. Essentially, the co-ordinating committee formalised lines of communication and provided a statutory forum through which preventative measures could be discussed and then taken forward by the public service agencies concerned. These moves were met with a lukewarm response from local authorities.<sup>121</sup> The request that local authorities set up co-ordination committees contained in the circular was either dealt with perfunctorily or ignored.<sup>122</sup> When challenged, local authorities often claimed that this sort of communication and co-ordination work already took place amongst local government departments without the need for it to be formalised under a specific committee—and this was particularly true for small authorities.<sup>123</sup> It must be said however, that some authorities who had appointed a forward-thinking Children's Officer rose to the challenge. In Lanark, for example, the Children's Officer committed a strident opinion to paper in 1956 stating:

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<sup>119</sup> NRS, ED11/401: Proposed Family Rehabilitation Service. Quotation from a letter written by MP and Home Office minister, K. G. Younger, addressed to John Edwards at the Home Department, dated 22nd July 1948.

<sup>120</sup> NRS ED11/409: Homeless Children: Discussion between English and Scottish departments on children neglected in their own homes—Prevention—Co-ordination Committees.

<sup>121</sup> NRS, ED11/407: Homeless Children: Children Neglected or Mistreated in their Own Homes—Role of the RSSPCC in Co-ordinating Arrangements by Local Authorities.

<sup>122</sup> NRS, ED11/409: Homeless Children: Discussion between English and Scottish departments on children neglected in their own homes—Prevention—Co-ordination Committees; and see ED11-405: reply to circular counties.

<sup>123</sup> NRS, ED11/409: Homeless Children: Discussion Between English and Scottish Departments on Children Neglected in their Own Homes—Prevention—Co-ordination Committees.

The break-up of families is a canker that is draining the strength of our communities and the immediate institution of a widespread and effective system of prevention has become an absolute necessity in the interests of the nation.<sup>124</sup>

In 1952, the Home Department decided to find out more about what the response to their circular had been. Internal correspondence at the Home Department records that, at a conference organised by the Scottish Council of Social Service on the subject of neglected children, held in March 1952—attended by many representatives of local authorities and voluntary organisations—it was ‘clear from discussions that while there had been a good deal of talk about what should be done, little had in fact as yet been done.’<sup>125</sup> The minute goes on to state that where the RSSPCC are concerned, they ‘imagine that they have been to some extent slighted by the local authorities (and even by the Central Department)’ and that their work had ‘not been properly appreciated’.<sup>126</sup> Certainly, the RSSPCC were very wary of sending a representative to sit on what otherwise was a local authority agency for multiple reasons. Mostly these centred on the fact that this organisation’s local committees had a membership made up entirely of volunteers who were essentially unqualified to comment on complex family problems; the relatively few professional officers employed by the RSSPCC were concerned that the confidential information entrusted to them by families should not be shared in this open way.<sup>127</sup>

Given that this was an initiative that was moving at a pace under Home Office guidance in local authorities in England and Wales, the Scottish Office did not want to be left behind; they continued to try to persuade Scottish local authorities. Eventually, the issue was given over to a committee of the Advisory Council who reported in 1956:

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<sup>124</sup> NRS, ED11/409: Homeless Children: Discussion Between English and Scottish Departments on Children Neglected in their Own Homes—Prevention—Co-ordination Committees; quotation from: County Council of the county of Lanark Children’s Department, Some Notes on Preventative Work in the County of Lanark Landward Area, p. 11.

<sup>125</sup> NRS, ED11/407: Homeless Children: Children Neglected or Mistreated in their Own Homes—Role of the RSSPCC in Co-ordinating Arrangements by Local Authorities, letter from Children’s Officer 16 March 1951.

<sup>126</sup> NRS, ED11/407: Homeless Children: Children Neglected or Mistreated in their Own Homes—Role of the RSSPCC in Co-ordinating Arrangements by Local Authorities, letter from Children’s Officer 16 March 1951.

<sup>127</sup> NRS, ED11/407: Homeless Children: Children Neglected or Mistreated in their Own Homes—Role of the RSSPCC in Co-ordinating Arrangements by Local Authorities. Memorandum 29/3/1951.



We learn with interest that 75 percent of local authorities have appointed co-ordinating officers; 40 percent have set up co-ordinating committees; and 25 percent of local authorities have committees which meet regularly.<sup>128</sup>

When childcare transferred to the Scottish Education Department in the early 1960s, they asked the Advisory Council to conduct a more thorough inquiry. The resulting report stated that:

None of the local authority services which have powers and duties to guard the interests of deprived children is exclusively aimed at preventing neglect or fully equipped to do so...If local authorities are to provide all forms of assistance, which are needed to tackle the causes of neglect, they will have to be given additional powers and duties.<sup>129</sup>

This report hinted at what was to come in terms of legislation particularly in terms of the ambition that a 'comprehensive family welfare service is the desirable long-term objective'.<sup>130</sup> But as the report indicates, it would take the implementation of further legislation, in the shape of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 to really begin to get the ball rolling across Scotland where preventative strategies were concerned; such statutory requirements were of course further cemented in the Social Work Act, 1968.

Notwithstanding, in 1964, Glasgow Children's Department reported that the number of children in their care had risen in the year 1963-4 from 2,182 to 2,262. The Children's Officer remarked that 'at a time when additional powers have been given to local authorities to extend their preventative service it would appear, at first thought, rather paradoxical that the number of children in care should show an increase.'<sup>131</sup> Glasgow argued that the referral of children by other social agencies had meant that they still had to bring children into care under the 1948 Act but were adhering to the spirit of the new legislation by boarding these children with relatives, thus preserving the 'family tie'.<sup>132</sup> Glasgow had long been over burdened by the level

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<sup>128</sup> NRS, ED11/409: Homeless Children: Discussion between English and Scottish Departments on Children Neglected in Their Own Homes—Prevention—Co-ordination Committees; quotation from the 'Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care Report on Prevention and Coordination', p. 2.

<sup>129</sup> Scottish Education Department: Prevention of Neglect of Children, Report of the Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (March, 1963), p. 22.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. p. 23.

<sup>131</sup> GCA: The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Fifteenth Annual Report, 1963-1964, p. 3.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.



of cases it dealt with and a chronic shortage of qualified staff. In this type of context, the idea that 'prevention' would solve the plight of deprived children was over ambitious. The ways that prevention worked to make the lives of children better and worse, will be further explored in Part II of this report.

## Attitudes to Children in Care

### Overview

Children in care in the post-war period attracted sympathy, but this was coupled with low expectations and limited understanding of the reasons that underlay their behaviour on the part of those responsible for their care. Whilst there was a move away from earlier characterisations of such children as degenerate and requiring intervention to prevent them perpetuating the patterns of their parents, there was—in professional circles—a much better understanding of what these children needed in order to thrive (including a focus on child psychology). It took a long time for change to occur in the delivery of care, especially in residential settings. Arguably it was not until the late 1960s that attitudes fundamentally shifted towards an approach that recognised these children required much more than merely a substitute home.

The written record of children placed in care does reveal a variety of attitudes towards these children on the part of state officials, carers, authority figures and sometimes ordinary members of the public—much of which can be interpreted as unwitting testimony. In reviewing these sources today, we can now read between the lines to interpret the often-unconscious attitudes displayed towards children in care. Where a child gave no trouble, for example, officers were likely to simply record this: 'progressing satisfactorily' being a typical type of remark. However, undoubtedly, children's case files are most revelatory when placements ran into difficulty.

In response to popular publicity given to a perceived increase in juvenile delinquency in 1953, a letter to the *Aberdeen Evening Express* from a 'grandfather' expressed the view that:

We hear far too much about repressions and complexes and all that, and many thoughtful but ignorant young parents are being prevented from giving their children healthy discipline by the fear of all the terrifying jargon used by half-

baked students of psychology. A good leathering when needed will do far less than the dangerous “freedom” insisted on in too many highbrow quarters.<sup>133</sup>

The wisdom that children needed firm discipline as well as affection and a stable home life was not a notion likely to be much questioned in Scotland in the years following the Children Act. While most of the population might have balked at adults causing deliberate, lasting injury to any child, however wilful, the idea that parents (or those with direct responsibility for care) should intervene to put a stop to socially unacceptable behaviour was commonly held. Where children brought into the care system were concerned, there was awareness that these children often presented challenges and their behaviour might be deemed ‘maladjusted’ to varying degrees, all of which could affect general attitudes towards these youngsters. Already lacking security and attention from a reliable adult, they were at once the subject of sentimental sympathy, but when their behaviour proved difficult, the need to apply firm discipline was not seen as antithetical to a constructive approach to their care.

Given the poor physical condition of many children taken into the care system it is not surprising perhaps that care in the post-war decades was shaped by primarily medical concerns. However, the perhaps unintended consequence of this approach was that children’s bodies were given greater attention than their emotional condition.<sup>134</sup> Children’s homes were often run on a medical model, with some resembling hospitals or sanatoriums rather than homes, staffed by ‘matrons’ wearing uniforms. Official inspection of both residential and foster care tended, at least until the early 1960s, to focus on material provision and children’s physical health. One cannot escape the conclusion that children in care were regarded as different with little acknowledgment at the service delivery level that children might require more than a port in a storm to enable them to move on in life.

A persistent thread in many children’s case files, for example, are the generally low expectations held for children’s educational attainments. Children were often described as ‘backward’, ‘not very bright’ or as ‘no scholar’ without much acknowledgement that such children had usually experienced a level of disruption in their early years that would undoubtedly have impacted on their development. Others were described as ‘difficult’ and as requiring ‘discipline’—the nature of which is rarely detailed. Such attitudes, once they had been discussed amongst those adults charged with responsibility, were doubtless communicated to children—whether

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<sup>133</sup> Aberdeen Evening Express: ‘Letter from a Grandfather’, 13 November 1953, p. 3.

<sup>134</sup> See H. Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England 1872–1989* (London 1994), pp. 1–14.

directly or indirectly—and must have had an impact on children’s sense of self-esteem and confidence. Low expectations had a profound impact on children’s destinies once they had been discharged. The fact that the vast majority of those in care ended up in unskilled or low-skilled work reflected the expectations held by those responsible for their education and the practical difficulties they encountered in moving on from care. Children boarded in remote areas encountered very restricted employment opportunities and often had to move away for training or work with little support. It is telling that when individual children exceeded those expectations they were lauded and those responsible for their care congratulated themselves. For example, in its Annual Report for 1947 Glasgow Corporation noted:

During the past year the scholastic and educational success of our children, which we have now grown to expect, has been maintained. In one local school in Inverness-shire, approximately two thirds of the prizes were won by boarded out children from Glasgow. One lad, in taking his Higher Leaving Certificate, has shown a particular bent for languages and application has now been made for his admission to the University with a view to his becoming a Language Teacher. Another lad, mentioned in last year's Report as Dux of his school has completed his first year's course at University and continues to show excellent progress while a girl, attending a Teacher's Training College, is doing very well. One boy who recently completed his training at a Technical College has obtained a position as Meteorological Assistant with the Air Ministry. One girl taking a Classics Course at the University and a lad studying for the B.Sc. degree in Electrical Engineering have both obtained employment during the summer vacation. In the field of sport, one of our girls won the School Cup for swimming. Several children are studying music and I learn that one girl shows such promise as a singer that she is likely to have an audition at the B.B.C. A number of children have won bursaries for secondary education...<sup>135</sup>

Yet these successes were in the minority.

Common also in the records kept by childcare officers are throwaway remarks made about the overall demeanour and appearance of children—whether they were cheerful or dour, robust or small in stature. It is impossible to draw hard and fast conclusions from such evidence. These professionals were meant to establish a close relationship with both children, foster parents and residential staff in a way that

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<sup>135</sup> GCA: Corporation of Glasgow Welfare Department Annual Report, 1947, p. ii.

promoted greater understanding of the needs of individuals.<sup>136</sup> We can only conclude that circumstances often affected this ambition. Childcare officers who had heavy caseloads, foster parents whose talents were tested to the limits, overcrowded children's homes, and a lack of any real insight into the challenges involved with overcoming early experiences of deprivation all conspired to encourage a very constrained view of how best to counter disadvantage.

Overall, conformity was what was expected (and required) of children who entered the care system: mechanisms put in place to care for them—whether this was by boarding out or placement in an institution—aimed to encourage self-discipline and ensure that children reached adulthood with the necessary skills to become self-supporting. Over decades, countless numbers of children managed to do just this and, of course, such children were celebrated by local authorities and voluntary organisations: albeit in an anonymous way. The Annual Report of Glasgow's Children's Department used the following illustration in 1953, it is typical of its type:

An isolated case of cruelty to a boarded-out child can give the uninformed quite a wrong impression of the system of fostering...But let a boarded-out child, in her own words, give the other side of the case. About to start a career as a nurse, she writes to one of our officials:

"Need I say how grateful I am for all you have done for me? I am more grateful than I can say. One thing I do know is that, even if I had parents of my own, I would never have been where I am to-day. My sincere thanks to you for all the help and kindness..."<sup>137</sup>

The child who accepted the help offered conformed to ideals of 'making good progress', left the care system able to fend for themselves and, moreover, exhibited gratitude towards society for their rescue, might expect to attract praise: but not all children found themselves in this position.

Today we would interpret many of the common behaviours acknowledged as troublesome or difficult among children placed in care—such as bed-wetting, absconding, stealing, lying, being uncommunicative—as signals of psychological distress and attachment disorders requiring treatment rather than punishment. But in

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<sup>136</sup> NRS, ED11/514: Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care Boarding-Out Memorandum, 1959. This explicitly acknowledges the need to take into account the child's needs and to match the child with the foster parents.

<sup>137</sup> The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Fourth Annual Report, 1952-53, p. 11.

the post-war decades—at least until the early 1960s and sometimes much later—there were those within the care system who continued to punish children for these behaviours rather than seeking to understand their root causes—let alone ask for guidance with addressing them. In 1952 for example, the following case was reported:

A Speyside widow, Mary Gray Trollard...was at Elgin Sheriff Court to-day fined £15, with the option of sixty days' imprisonment. She was charged with having while being the guardian of [REDACTED] aged seven years, between December 5 and 8, assaulted and ill-treated the boy by striking him on various parts of the body with a leather belt. Mr A. Watson Wishart, Procurator Fiscal, stated that the boy, with his 12-year-old brother, had been boarded out by a local authority—not Moray and Nairn—In October 1951. There had previously been no complaints about the boy who had been well cared for. On December 9, however, considerable bruises were seen on [REDACTED] body when at school. Mr Wishart said that the Inspector of Cruelty in his report described the injuries as the worse he had seen on a boy that age. The fiscal said that apparently the boy had been guilty of unclean habits and this was given as the excuse for the thrashing. The boys had since been removed from the woman's care.<sup>138</sup>

While the experiences of evacuation during the Second World War had encouraged some professionals to recognise and provide insights into the ways that separation from birth families affected children, causing failure to thrive and symptoms such as enuresis and encopresis, it would take some time for this understanding to achieve more widespread acceptance and longer for knowledge to be translated into action. Training of childcare officers was severely limited until the 1970s meaning that few of those working on the front line would have had any in-depth education on child development and behaviour. More commonly, and especially amongst those charged with their day-to-day care as well as others who had contact with them in the community such as schoolteachers, children brought into care were regularly characterised as difficult, bad, wilful, troublesome, lazy and prone to 'dirty habits'. For some it was children's backgrounds that predisposed them to unappealing traits and behaviour, thus recalling attitudes inscribed in the Poor Law and nineteenth century beliefs in inherited degeneracy. Those children who did not or could not conform did not find themselves part of the celebratory rhetoric of annual reports and it is the experiences of these children which are explored in what follows.

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<sup>138</sup> Aberdeen Evening Express: 'Widow Fined £15 for Thrashing Boy', 24 December 1952, p. 8.

## Attitudes to the boarded-out child

In some ways, the letter of the law may have inadvertently promoted many of the common, negative attitudes directed towards children in care. The preferred system of boarding out aimed to transform deprived youngsters into individuals who were able to take advantage of the same opportunities as their non-disadvantaged peers—with little reflection on the experiences that had brought them into care in the first place. Indeed, foster parents rarely possessed any accurate information about the child's circumstances that had necessitated him or her being taken into care. In 1948, such miracle-working was considered perfectly possible if all concerned with the boarding out process acted with a positive will:

...children's committees and children's officers should have constantly in mind that the aim of boarding-out is to give the child as far as humanly possible the opportunity to live the same kind of life as a child of the same age, and of approximately similar circumstances, living happily with his own parents. We are confident that with continuous effort on the part of all concerned the boarding-out system could be yet more beneficial than it is. No matter what safeguards are introduced in the way of inspections, or what generosity is shown in the way of payment of allowances, boarding-out can be really satisfactory only if children's committees, children's officers and foster parents play their parts in a spirit of co-operation and sympathetic understanding.<sup>139</sup>

The Children Act 1948 was clear that it was the duty of the local authority to exercise its powers in respect to the child 'so as to further his best interests and to afford him the opportunity for the proper development of his character and abilities.'<sup>140</sup> The implication here was that children in care should not suffer any further disadvantages in terms of their general welfare, and key to this aim was that the state should do everything in its power to provide an approximation of 'normal home life.'<sup>141</sup> It was agreed that the best way of achieving this was via the placement of children in foster homes where they would be cared for by approved guardians who would incorporate such children into the bosom of their family, to treat them as one of their own and thus, by this system of normalisation, the child would slough off any ill effects of early trauma and grow into a well-adjusted adult. But the situation for many children sent off to foster care was that they were unable to easily trust adults

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<sup>139</sup> Report of the Boarding-Out Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 17.

<sup>140</sup> Children Act 1948, para 12.

<sup>141</sup> See Norrie, Legislation Framework Part 2.



and many foster parents were ill-prepared for such recalcitrance and readily became frustrated by it. Children's case files are peppered with statements such as: 'difficult', 'a bit cheeky', 'very disobedient and impertinent'.<sup>142</sup>

Implicit within this scheme of things was the wider context of societal attitudes towards children in Scotland: in this period physical punishment for misbehaviour was both officially sanctioned in schools and seen as a duty of the responsible parent. Similarly, a firm but fair sternness in the face of so-called maladjusted behaviour was a preferred solution. 'Many fathers and mothers pat their children on the back when they should be slapping them lower down!' declared Fife county's senior probation officer in 1950.<sup>143</sup> In 1945, an Aberdeenshire farmer was charged with assault on a boarded-out child. This man was incensed by the boy's persistent lying and in defence of his behaviour towards the child stated: 'I gave the boy just the same thrashing as I got when I was his age, and I needed it...I had to whip him for saying he was badly used at school when it wasn't true. I took down his trousers and then punished him with my hand.'<sup>144</sup> The child in question, ██████████, claimed that he 'was shouting out and crying, and he gave me some more...I didn't sleep that night because my buttocks were sore'. A medical doctor—Dr George Mitchell—who had examined the boy following his 'last whipping' and who was called to give evidence stated, '[h]e just got a good thrashing. The boy was well cared for and well nourished'. In reporting of this case, the child is recorded as admitting, moreover, that he probably deserved punishment for his behaviour.<sup>145</sup> This indicated the ways in which children internalised the negative views directed towards them, and at some level, were accepting of aggressive punishment delivered by adults who they were supposed to be able to trust—a common situation of the era.

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<sup>142</sup> For example: GCA, D-Hew 28/9/46: Out of Care Children born 1944 ██████████; D-Hew 28/9/51: Out of care children born 1945 ██████████; D-Hew 28/9/52: Out of care children born 1945 ██████████ NAMES TO BE WITHHELD

<sup>143</sup> Quoted in 'Parental Neglect', St. Andrews Citizen, 21 January 1950, p. 2.

<sup>144</sup> For discussion of how attitudes to corporal punishment are transmitted across generations see: Julie Brownlie, 'The Basic Stuff of Our Memories': Embodying and Embedding Discipline', Sociological Research Online, Volume 11, Issue 4 (2006) available at: <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/11/4/brownlie.html> [accessed 30/8/2018]. In this article Brownlie argues that, 'physical discipline is temporal not only because it is concerned with the nature of the child's body/self at the time of punishment but because parents engage with memories from their own childhood and, therefore, with how childhood selves have been disciplined across social and biographical time'.

<sup>145</sup> Quoted in 'Scots Farmer on Trial Judgment Postponed', The Scotsman 1 June 1945, p. 3.

In the rhetoric of childcare at the time, there appears to have been little acknowledgement that moving into a new foster home could of itself be a very traumatic event. The Advisory Committee on Boarding Out cautiously understated this common difficulty when they issued their report in 1950, stating that older children might find a home in rural parts 'disturbing' and that even when foster parents were sympathetic, this kind of 'sudden change may lead to difficulties of behaviour that take a long time to disappear.'<sup>146</sup> Despite the acknowledgment by the Advisory Council that children might find the experience of boarding out unsettling, at least initially, case files do not reveal that this was a matter taken seriously by those official visitors to the boarded-out child despatched by local authorities.

There was even less notice given to the fact that many boarded-out children probably never felt secure. Any change in circumstances for guardians, or a failure by such guardians to cope with the child, could lead to a child being sent away as our case studies have demonstrated. Given that many of these children would have active memories of precisely this type of disruption when removed from parental homes, this must have been something of an ongoing trauma that prohibited children's ability to speak out about their fears. The case of a child who was boarded out to the outer Hebrides following his mother's death and who suffered continuously from enuresis that was ascribed by the family doctor to the child's 'sense of insecurity' is an atypical example.<sup>147</sup>

While a new home with caring foster parents was the ideal, the reality regularly fell short of this, for the straightforward reason that children brought into care often required much more than the replacement of one home with another. What we would now recognise as post-traumatic stress disorder occurred in children who might have suffered badly from the effects of poverty, family breakdown, the death of one parent or both, and separation from siblings. Such traumas, and the ways they might affect children, potentially with life-long consequences, were not so completely understood in this period. Only those working in child psychiatry and child guidance understood children's emotional disturbance and its causes.<sup>148</sup> Moreover, in cases where it was officially acknowledged that children had been profoundly damaged by their early experiences, such children were not even considered for boarding out and remained in institutions. For those deemed suitable

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<sup>146</sup> Report of the Boarding-Out Committee, p. 17.

<sup>147</sup> GCA, D-Hew 28/9/54: Out of Care children born 1945.

<sup>148</sup> On the development of child guidance in the UK see J. Stewart, *Child Guidance in Britain, 1918-1955* (London, 2016) and on Scotland, L. Abrams, *The Orphan Country* (1998), pp. 165-70.



for fostering there was a tacit assumption that following a period of adjustment, any problems would, at the very least, be ameliorated, and in the best of cases, these would disappear.

Overall, the means taken to deal with some of the common behaviours exhibited by children brought into the care system depended to a great extent on serendipity—some foster parents were, of course, able to provide a nurturing environment, waited patiently for children to adjust and accepted ongoing problems in the hope that these might eventually recede. Others used disciplinary measures in order to keep them ‘in check’. Yet others requested the removal of children. The prevailing attitude of the time or at least until the late 1950s, placed the onus on children themselves to develop recognition of what was good for them and—with the encouragement of guardians—desist from behaviours that we now know were often beyond their own control. When children failed to conform, negativity and corrosive disappointment—on both sides—was the common response. There can be little doubt that for every individual who had a positive experience of being fostered in this period, there are also those who recall their relationships with guardians as lacking in empathy and affection and characterised by the too easy use of physical punishment.

The notion of providing children with a clean slate via boarding out was an ideology that was difficult to shift in post-war Scotland, despite existing knowledge about the effects of deprivation, neglect, and maternal separation in early childhood. Available records give no indication that foster carers received any specific guidance on how to recognise psychological distress, or deal with it effectively. Neither is there any evidence that foster parents were offered support or that children were referred to specialist help such as child guidance, at least before the late 1960s. Of course, with many children boarded in rural areas, access to such services would have been difficult. It took until 1959 and a Scottish Advisory Council Memorandum on Boarding Out to acknowledge the very real challenges that were intrinsic to the boarded-out system and to question the ‘easy assumptions about the adaptability of children and the natural goodness of foster parents.’<sup>149</sup>

It is worth remembering too that this pattern persisted until well into the 1960s, although boarding to rural areas was officially frowned upon. In 1964, for example, of the 1,467 children boarded by Glasgow Corporation fewer than half of these were with foster carers in Glasgow. Two typical examples were that 112 children were in

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<sup>149</sup> NRS, ED11/514: Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care Boarding-Out Memorandum, 1959, p. 6.

homes in Inverness county and 50 placed in Banffshire.<sup>150</sup> And of the total number, 21 were returned to Glasgow during the year 1963-4 because of 'behaviour difficulties'. During the earlier heyday of boarding out, many children clustered in such environments could not have escaped the knowledge that rather than finding a new home, they were sojourners: the constant arrival and departure of their peers was a regular reminder of this that militated against any feeling of security or encouraged a fast bond between them and their carers.<sup>151</sup>

#### Attitudes towards children in institutions

Public attitudes towards the children resident in homes was based upon the image the institution cultivated—by and large this was one of clean, well-fed, well-dressed, and well-behaved young citizens. In the popular imagination of Scots in the mid-twentieth century, children's homes were most famously represented by those run as large-scale institutions such as Quarrier's Homes. To a very great extent, this famous village became the most recognisable face of institutional childcare in Scotland. There can be no doubt that this situation provided something of a false representation of what children in care gained from being placed in a children's home. When members of the public visited such homes, which they generally did by pre-arranged invitation, they tended to receive a good impression, as we see in the following example:

Ladies' Community Club—A most interesting outing was made last Wednesday by the members of the Ladies' Community Club when they visited Quarrier's Homes, Bridge of Weir. On arrival they were met by a guide who showed them a villa occupied by 20 children (eight boys and 12 girls) and cared for by their foster parents. Everything was beautifully kept and the members were most impressed with what they saw. It was explained that each child was given sweets and pocket money every week, and that a sum of money is deposited in the bank for them each week. The members then enjoyed tea and in the evening they attended Church service along with the children. A great and sincere interest is taken in the school and in the foster parents by the children, and when they leave to take up work in all parts of the world, they mostly keep in

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<sup>150</sup> The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Fifteenth Annual Report, 1963-64, p. 11.

<sup>151</sup> See L.Abrams, "'Blood is thicker than water": Family, Fantasy and Identity in the Lives of Scottish Foster Children' in J.Lawrence & P.Starkey (eds.), *Child Welfare and Social Action in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: International Perspectives*, pp. 195-215, (Liverpool, 2001).

touch with the ones who gave them love and care and a chance to make good.’<sup>152</sup>

Fundraising for the unfortunate children made homeless through no fault of their own and placed in homes was a regular occupation of all kinds of civic groups in Scotland. Thus, these groups—like the Kirkcaldy Ladies’ Community Club—might be made welcome when they asked to visit a Home, but this was by appointment, and as we have seen in the example above, such visits were carefully choreographed.

The surviving record of children’s actual experiences in the great variety of these institutions is very uneven and, where it does survive what is recorded is partial and often subjective. Therefore, to obtain a generalised overview of how children fared, and how their care was managed (and how this provides insights into attitudes to these children), the best available sources are contained in Scottish Office inspection reports. The written record contained in reports suggests that the majority of Scottish Office inspectors and local authority childcare officers were sympathetic to the needs of such children and appreciated they might need more than simply a substitute home to thrive—yet they were rarely able to effect substantive improvements in children’s care due to chronic staff shortages in the majority of Scottish children’s homes, a lack of sufficient suitable training for staff, and in some cases lack of resources. Many reports reveal the fact that inspectors of residential homes undoubtedly appreciated the need of children for more than just the material necessities of life—food, shelter, warmth and so forth (though sometimes even these were in short supply before the 1960s)—and note when measures were taken to provide children with affection, stimulation and the encouragement to develop as individuals; but these documents are also replete with doubts about whether such establishments could provide such all-round care. During an inspection conducted in a Glasgow Corporation home in 1965, the matron in charge admitted to the inspector that she found some of the children in her care ‘difficult to like’.<sup>153</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s, children who did not progress from children’s homes to foster care included those who exhibited behaviours deemed so problematic as to be unacceptable to guardians, and older children—particularly boys—who were a less popular choice among potential guardians. In 1961, the Children’s Department of Glasgow Corporation admitted that while they had a waiting list of guardians wishing little girls, in common with most local authorities they had great difficulty placing

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<sup>152</sup> Notice, Fife Free Press, & Kirkcaldy Guardian, 17 March 1956, p. 14:

<sup>153</sup> NRS, ED11/525/2: Glasgow: Lochgarry Home, Inspection Report, 1965, p. 1. CLOSED FILE.

boys who were perceived to be more troublesome.<sup>154</sup> Roman Catholic children were also harder to place with families; and large sibling groups often met a similar fate. It is not unreasonable to assert that many such children were aware of their own disadvantages and within the environment of children's homes where there was little stability among staff or residents, such awareness had a negative effect on the behaviour of children who felt themselves to have been rejected. Moreover, in such environments, often overcrowded with underprivileged youngsters, the need to create a sense of order in threatened chaos was easily perceived as paramount and a great deal depended on the skills held by the person placed in charge as to how this was accomplished.

Before the late 1960s, few residential care staff had much, if any, training for the challenging work of caring for children in this context. Aside from those homes run by religious orders, or large-scale institutions such as Quarrier's, in the immediate post-war decades senior staff tended to be drawn from the nursing profession or, in homes and approved schools that catered specifically for boys, they might be recruited from the ranks of ex-military. These were not backgrounds that necessarily provided a good grounding in the challenges of running a children's home or residential school, housing a variety of youngsters each with their own complex needs. The Clyde Committee had expressed this view when they commented that there existed too much readiness to accept that someone who had a nursing qualification would 'make a good matron'. They recommended trained nurses for the under-twos, but said that older children should be in the charge of 'a person specially trained in childcare, but not a trained nurse, unless she has also taken this special training'.<sup>155</sup> When difficulties arose among children placed in residential care—as for example around the administering of discipline—the lack of appropriate training and experience held by staff is easily seen.

While it must be conceded that many residential care staff performed an exceedingly stressful job to the best of their abilities, these abilities might fall far short of contemporary requirements. In this period, senior positions in children's homes were residential and the person in charge was on call morning, noon, and night. In Scotland, in the absence of a pool of available staff with childcare qualifications, it was imagined at the time that nursing sisters would naturally have the kindly

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<sup>154</sup> The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Twelfth Annual Report, 1960-61, p. 10 (no file reference).

<sup>155</sup> Scottish Home Department, Report of the Committee on Homeless Children. Cmd. 6911 (Edinburgh, 1946), p. 26.

disposition required to care for the needs of the disadvantaged young, a strong sense of self-discipline and patience to cope with stresses caused by difficult children, as well as the organisational skills to manage staff and oversee a safe, clean and efficiently-functioning environment. The medical model of delivering care in which many of these women were trained proved to be something of a blunt tool when they were encouraged by regulation and inspection to re-create a warm and welcoming homely atmosphere for children. In Lochgarry Home run by Glasgow Corporation during the 1960s, and in which the matron admitted she struggled to find affection for some of her charges, she and her deputy wore the traditional uniform of the nurse—navy dresses and white caps. This set the tone for much else that pertained to this home: children were not allowed to speak at mealtimes and ‘staff were quick to pounce on any child in danger of breaking this rule.’<sup>156</sup> Although contained in an old and imposing villa with large rooms that were immaculately maintained, the inspector remarked that the playroom contained only:

...a piano, six wooden chairs and two armchairs (one reserved for the Matron or visitors) and one table. There is a bench along one of the long walls, on which the children were sitting when I visited. They were singing “Do No Sinful Action” over and over again, the children individually singing the first verse while all joined in the second. Talkative or restless children were sent to sit alone. A small cupboard contains some books, two dolls a few boxes of games and some leggo...<sup>157</sup>

Thirty-two children were in residence at the time. Children were not allowed out of the home unescorted because of the perception that they might get up to mischief. In such environments the focus of the institution was order, discipline and routine and children were ‘cases’ that had to be dealt with. Most children in Lochgarry did progress to boarding out, after varying periods of time, but in other long-term institutions the approach employed by former nurses within the setting of children’s homes tended to increase the risk that children would become slaves to routine and liable to institutionalisation.

Blairvadach, one of Glasgow Corporation’s homes, located in Argyll and Bute, provides another good example of how different attitudes to children’s care co-existed and might clash. This home, which contained upwards of 60 children all aged under five years, suffered from the typical staff shortages prevalent throughout the

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<sup>156</sup> NRS, ED11/525/2: Lochgarry Home, Inspection Report, 1965, p. 3. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 5. CLOSED FILE.

1950s and 60s. In 1967 a new Matron was in charge. As demanded by Glasgow Corporation she was a qualified nurse and she was clearly doing her best as the inspectors recorded:

On the child care side there continues to be a grave shortage of suitable personnel. Miss McFarlane is concerned at the lack of individual attention received by the toddlers but has not the staff to enable her to “breakdown” these groups...[children’s] material needs are well met but the staff-child ratio is such that toddlers cannot receive the individual attention, stimulus and opportunities they require for their full development. The matron is aware of these deficiencies in the home. She is conscientiously doing her best with the resources at her command.<sup>158</sup>

An inspector observed the meticulous cleanliness and order that prevailed, but also that the children showed ‘obvious signs of deprivation and several were moping alone or rocking disconsolately. They all tended to crowd round and demand attention.’<sup>159</sup>

Inspectors who visited the home noted that there were ‘problems which are beyond Miss McFarlane’s understanding and which require consultative discussions’. One inspector instanced a case of a 5-year-old boy who was masturbating and disturbing other children. The matron’s only solution was to have him removed while the inspector’s solution was to involve a Child Care Officer who would be able to make arrangements for psychiatric help to be given.<sup>160</sup>

Attitudes towards expressions of sexuality in older children were also problematic. In another of Glasgow’s remote homes—Dunclutha Home near Kirn, Argyll and Bute—the matron in this home claimed that corporal punishment was generally not used, though ‘occasionally there would be an ‘on the spot’ smack on the bottom with the hand.’ While such punishments were not recorded the matron ‘confessed to one half-hearted attempt to strap a girl of 13 years on the hand: this was for associating with a ‘tinker’ boy she had met at school. This punishment had also not been logged, nor had she recorded the fact that the girl was, for a week after, only allowed out with staff escort.’<sup>161</sup> The inspector pointed out the regulations ‘regarding the

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<sup>158</sup> NRS, ED11/529/2: Local Authority Children’s Homes 1956-1968: Blairvadach and Eda Yarrow, Rhu, Dunbartonshire: Inspector’s Reports; inspection report for visit made 29/11/1967. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>159</sup> NRS, ED11/529/2: Blairvadach and Eda Yarrow: Inspector’s Reports; inspection report dated 29/11/1967. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> NRS, ED11/523/2: Glasgow, Dunclutha Children’s Home, Kirn; Inspection Report dated for visit made 25/1/1968. CLOSED FILE.

recording of punishments' and expressed the view that 'sexual mis-behaviour' was a matter that evidently was frightening to this matron.<sup>162</sup>

The following case is illustrative of the common experience of a child who was consigned to long-term institutional care and labelled as a problem throughout his time in care.

*Case Study III: Child C*<sup>163</sup>

This child was brought into care in the early 1950s alongside siblings when their parent was admitted to hospital though serious neglect was also implied within the record; he was placed in one of Glasgow's suburban children's homes while his siblings were boarded out. No specific reason is stated for separating them in this way. This child spent his first year in care moving between hospital admissions and the children's home. Then, following his final hospital stay he was transferred to a different home, again run by Glasgow Corporation but situated outside the city. During this time he was variously described as a 'mischievous boy, given to wandering' and as 'likeable' but also as 'very aggressive and pugnacious in manner'. Three years after his initial admission to care, he was moved to yet another home. No reason is stated for this in the personal file but in copied extracts from his children's home records it is indicated that the child had made a statement to a Children's Department Superintendent and to residential care staff that, 'indecent practices had been committed against him by a gardener'. This matter was reported to the Children's Officer, but there is no note of police involvement and no mention of this in the Corporation minutes of the Children's Committee for this period. Instead, this little boy was simply moved along.

His stay at the third children's home was evidently unhappy; he misbehaved at school and was aggressive to a teacher and to other children. Then, having been in this home for only two months, he was again moved, this time back to the home in which he was first placed after admission: a one-word remark is beside this record: 'behaviour'. The Children's Officer then attempted to reunite the child with family

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<sup>162</sup> NRS, ED11/523/2: Glasgow, Dunclutha Children's Home, Kirn; Inspection Report dated for visit made 25/1/1968. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>163</sup> GCA D-Hew 28/9/52. This case file is unusual, in that it contains copied extracts from records that were kept by the children's homes concerned—in this period these were usually maintained separately from the child's personal case record. CLOSED FILE.



members, but this was unsuccessful.; Thereafter things did start to improve, and it is recorded that his behaviour settled for a time:

At the beginning was aggressive and given to bullying. Very disobedient. Fighting with other boys. Table manners very bad, throwing food about. Evidently felt the whole world was against him, so he was against it. Now is settled, gives very little trouble though still mischievous but in a likeable way. Still given to argue but without scenes. School work improved.

Throughout, this child wet the bed. Without any further note being provided, having been in care for six years, this boy was moved to a working boys' hostel on the south side of Glasgow where it is likely he was by far the youngest resident being still of primary school age. At this point he is described as a 'quarrelsome boy, requires very firm handling'. The officer recording remarked that the child did not like the hostel but according to the officer, this was 'not surprising because he resents discipline however mild'. He continued to wet the bed and was 'apprehended for shoplifting in Woolworths' for which he received a caution. Aged 13 years, he was eventually moved again—back to the home where the allegation of sexual abuse had occurred. At this time his behaviour is described as requiring:

...a firm hand but has so far been kept in place. Bullies other boys very much and is known for being light-fingered...Can be truculent in manner and obviously has a chip on his shoulders because nobody visits him and none of his family contact him has enough sense to feel he is having a raw deal. Can be likeable but hasn't enough incentive.

Repeated remarks are made in case notes about the need for 'discipline'. In the run up to this boy reaching school-leaving age he was 'still troublesome at school' though his case worker recorded that this was more than likely due to 'a lack of understanding by school staff.' Nevertheless, having incurred the wrath of the local secondary school as a 'disruptive influence', he was once again transferred to a different home in Glasgow. He was called into the Children's Department and interviewed by a member of staff there. During this conversation the boy alleged that the headteacher of his previous school picked on children from the residential home.

Things went from bad to worse for this child and his removal from his new place of residence was requested by the housefather who stated that 'he did not care where he goes' so long as he was moved. The boy was thereafter removed to a working



boys' hostel in another local authority area and warned of the 'serious consequences of misbehaving'.

Having left school, he was employed as a 'boy labourer'. Contact with Glasgow's Children's Department was then sporadic—either when the boy had to visit the department to collect new clothing for himself or, by occasional visits at the hostel made by a childcare officer. He lost his job after a few months for 'carrying on'. This boy was 'put out' of the hostel aged 16 for 'persistent bad language, temper and dirty habits' and turned up at the Children's Department in Glasgow where he told a member of staff that 'he was sick of being in children's' homes, of rules and regulations, and he wanted to be in a proper home. Explained to him that a proper home was just not feasible because of the very nature of his problem'.

Lodgings in Glasgow were his next residence. His landlady communicated with the Children's Department during this stay indicating that she was not keen to keep him as he was a bad influence on the behaviour of the other boys resident in her lodging house: it was commented that 'he undoubtedly has a chip on his shoulder' and this was because, as the young man himself commented, 'he has been kicked out of wherever I've been'.

The remainder of this boy's experience in care was just as chequered. He was rejected by the army when he applied, was feckless with money, and continued to demand new clothing from the Children's Department. After another stay in a different hostel he moved back to a boarding house in Glasgow but here the landlady is recorded as having trouble getting rent from him and took away his key when it was discovered that he and another boy had brought a girl back to the boarding house one night. He voluntarily left his Corporation approved accommodation as soon as he became 18 years old and removed himself to lodgings he himself had chosen and which were described in his notes as being 'not a very satisfactory place'. The Children's Department washed their hands off him, and he was placed 'out of care' on the same day.

The trajectory of this boy through the care system was haphazard. His behaviour as well as his chronic bed-wetting clearly precluded any consideration that he might be found a foster family. Instead he was institutionalised but without any real attempt to create a sense of stability within this setting. The attitudes that underpinned the decision-making for this boy undoubtedly influenced his self-image—in the eyes of the adults charged with his care he was at first a likeable tearaway, but as his problems deepened he became simply a source of aggravation. His notes suggest

that there was at least tacit awareness that the care system itself was responsible for a lot of this boy's behaviour; but at the same time, because he refused to co-operate there appears to have been no will (or, perhaps, ability) to create a stable home for him. Every time he got out of hand, he was moved on to become some other institution's problem. There is no note that he was ever referred to child psychological service.

This case illustrates the ways in which children's individual identities and individual needs could easily become subsumed by the attitude that they were just another 'problem case'. Child C would not or could not bend to the will of the system and the system lost patience with him in the end. The final feature of this child's case is that somehow, he escaped a common fate of many children who found themselves in similar situations: this was the Approved School. Many children, including those who had first-hand experience of the care system in the 1950s and 1960s found themselves deemed 'out of control' when they got into more serious trouble with the law or school authorities. It is with these children that we see attitudes that sanctioned punitive control most clearly expressed. Following a circular sent to Approved Schools in 1967 about the application of corporal punishment, the Scottish Office collected responses to this issue. In his reply, the headmaster of Thornly Park School expressed the following view:

Unhappily the child population of an Approved School consists chiefly of those with little social training; such are outwith the control of parents, and, often, of day-school teachers; boys with anti-authority attitudes; children who are wilfully disobedient and harmful to society. It does not seem possible, therefore, to discipline and control such unruly children without the imposition of sanctions which are necessarily unpleasant.<sup>164</sup>

## Summary

One former Home Office and later Scottish Office civil servant commenting on the implementation of new regulations and legislation in the post-war period in Scotland, stated that in respect of childcare the general situation that emerged was that:

The first responsible authority, the Scottish Home Department, gave a less certain and inspired lead to child care than the Home Office for England and

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<sup>164</sup> NRS, ED15/563: Discipline: Replies in Response to Approved Schools Circular Letter No. 21/1967; letter from John M. Grant, Headmaster, Thornly Park School, Paisley to the Scottish Education Department, dated 31 January 1968.

Wales. The position improved from 1961 under stewardship of the Scottish Education Department, where the administrative side, even more than the professional, gave a positive and progressive lead. The local authorities failed to appoint new style children's officers of high calibre, and generally starved the service of staff, building and resources.<sup>165</sup>

Local authorities struggled to implement change in the face of a rising numbers of cases of children requiring some form of intervention. In the case of Glasgow, the picture is one of continuity with the pre-war regime in many respects. Whilst some of the personnel may have changed, the practices of dealing with children requiring care did not, at least in the short term. The Scottish Office failed to give much of a lead in the 1940s and 50s and came up against intransigent local authorities and voluntary organisations in respect of practices of boarding out, the running of residential homes and prevention strategies that were implemented piecemeal and without either the enthusiasm or resources needed to make real improvements in the experiences of children brought into the care system.

The childcare system in the post-war period until the 1960s was characterised by regimes in which the imposition of discipline and control might too easily trump patient understanding of children badly damaged often traumatised by their experiences. Yet, in some ways, the attitudes shown to such children were merely a mirror of wider societal views about keeping children in check. The clear line that existed in popular imagination between the innocent and vulnerable deprived child who deserved a chance to 'make good' and the potential juvenile delinquent likely to become a burden on society, became less clear cut once children entered the care system. This rendered many vulnerable to negative views that had adverse effects on the quality of the care afforded to them and their mental and emotional wellbeing.

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<sup>165</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services*, p. 115.

# Regulation and Inspection in Practice

## Boarding out, 1947-1959

### Overview

As is well established, the boarding-out system using foster homes primarily in rural settings had been the preferred solution for children requiring care since the nineteenth century in Scotland and inquirers into how this system operated following 1948 might be forgiven for thinking that not a lot changed for a surprising amount of time. While Children's Departments now had charge of placing children in foster care and overseeing their welfare, taking this over from public assistance bodies, many of the staff of the new departments had transferred over from previous administrative offices and may have been resistant to the notion that any reform of contemporary practice was necessary. As one commentator remarked, reforms were not 'received with great enthusiasm'.<sup>166</sup> The city of Glasgow—with thousands of children in its care—was prominent in maintaining pre-war practices, but it was not alone. Aberdeen's council was another that continued to show support to previous approaches with the Lord Provost proclaiming in 1947: '[t]here is no better life for any child than a home where there is a good guardian, no matter whether it is on a hillside or anywhere else.'<sup>167</sup> Children's Committees, who oversaw this work, were sometimes no more forward thinking. In clinging to such ideals (such as boarding out children in remote areas far from their families), they were, however, swimming against the tide of advice. The Clyde Committee was opposed to boarding out children on crofts for a wide range of reasons, stating that:

Some witnesses have condemned such a practice as unsuitable, and we feel there is substance in their criticism. While fully appreciating what has been accomplished in the past through this valuable service, and the opportunity of home life which has been afforded to homeless children on some crofts, we think that, under modern conditions, radical changes are necessary. We strongly deprecate the boarding out of city children on crofts in very remote areas where they have no real contact with other children, where they have no facilities for learning a trade which is congenial to them, or where the living conditions are bad. These conditions are aggravated in many cases by the advent of summer visitors. Investigation of conditions in Highland crofts has shown that the lack of sanitation and the absence of facilities for training the children in cleanliness and

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<sup>166</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services*, p. 98.

<sup>167</sup> *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 8 May 1947, p. 6.

personal habits make it inadvisable to board out children in remote crofts in the Highlands, where economic conditions are such that the practice of taking children seems to be regarded as an industry, and the labour obtained therefrom often enables the guardians to maintain their crofts. Instances were found where children on crofts were overworked by their foster parents. Other instances were found where the boarding out Authority did not pay for school dinners for the children, and the foster parents said they could not afford to pay for dinners at school. Enquiries from head teachers showed that, through lack of proper accommodation and through evening employment on the croft, boarded out children were deprived of time and opportunity for study, and were unable to make good the want of education suffered in their earlier years. In a few areas, good crofts which provide satisfactory foster homes do exist, but in most of these cases the foster parents have some subsidiary occupation in addition to crofting.<sup>168</sup>

Given the sheer numbers of children already boarded on crofts and in rural homes in the non-crofting counties, any shift away from this pattern was going to take time, especially in Glasgow that had by far the largest number of boarded-out children mostly in homes remote from the city. In 1949 Glasgow's Children's Department in its annual report restated its commitment to boarding out over the alternatives:

For various reasons legal adoption is not possible for the great majority of children in the care of the Local Authority and the nearest substitute is placing with a suitable foster-parent. However good it may be, a Residential Home cannot provide the family atmosphere with a "father" and "mother" to listen to the little tales of woe, the achievements, the exploits, etc., of a child. The fact that the child feels he is a normal child, receiving personal and individual care, gives that feeling of security and confidence so necessary for his successful upbringing. As will be seen from the statistics, there are over 2,000 children boarded out by the Children's Department. They are in over 1,000 foster homes which are regularly visited by officials of the Department and once per annum by members of the Children's Committee.

[...]

For many years Glasgow children were mainly boarded in highland or country areas. A campaign has been instituted for the finding of new foster homes and advertising is being carried out in cities, towns and large villages where there are facilities for a child to receive the benefit of full education, to be absorbed into industry, and in fact to make his home with his foster-parent. The homes in the highlands are excellent, the guardians have a grand record of past successes

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<sup>168</sup> Clyde Report, para 73, p. 21.

and there is no intention to close down any of the highland districts but experience has shown that many of the children have had to be removed from their boarding-out area because they could not be absorbed in industry in the locality.

It is pleasing to record the many successes of the boarding-out system. Several of the children have graduated in medicine, arts, and divinity, others have been successful in business, and many have entered the ordinary spheres of life. and become good and effective members of the community.<sup>169</sup>

While there may have been general agreement between central and local government that children already placed in rural homes and settled there should remain in this form of foster care to avoid further disruption to their lives, this was a practice that was supposed to decline sharply for forthcoming placements.<sup>170</sup> Ahead of legislation, the Home Department were alert to the fact that local authorities might need to be pushed to meet their responsibilities fully. Three reports provided for Scottish Office highlighted additional concerns about the conduct of authorities in respect of boarding out.<sup>171</sup>

The recruitment of foster parents was one issue. There was beginning to be a shortage of appropriate rural guardians leading to overcrowding on some crofts and concentrations in some areas.<sup>172</sup> There were also concerns about the lack of support given to rural guardians. In 1947 a report undertaken by a Medical Officer of Health, Dr Seymour, on behalf of the Home Department, raised some critical points regarding the administration of boarding out in the Highlands by local authorities which included Glasgow.<sup>173</sup> In the company of a female inspector from the Scottish Health Department (likely a health inspector, who at the time was responsible for checking on boarded-out children and ensuring that the local authorities were fulfilling their allotted role) Seymour visited 18 crofts on the Black Isle. They also

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<sup>169</sup> GCA, D-TC/72: The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: First Annual Report 1949-50, p. 9.

<sup>170</sup> The Committee of the Scottish Advisory Board that reviewed boarding out conceded that no abrupt changes should be recommended to local authorities but that the practice should be phased out with a view to halting this type of placement for children newly brought into care. See NRS, GD 534/12/5/4: Report of the Boarding-Out Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950), pp. 6-7.

<sup>171</sup> NRS, ED11/294: Homeless Children: Inspection of Boarded Out Children- Glasgow Boarding Out System. Reports by Seymour, Gordon and Morrison.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>173</sup> NRS, ED11/294: Homeless Children: Inspection of Boarded Out Children- Glasgow Boarding Out System; Seymour produced a two page letter including some general remarks on her visit and three page report, both are included in the file.

visited the local school where one-third of the children enrolled were boarded out from authorities like Glasgow and Greenock. Seymour arrived at a time when inspectors from both Glasgow and Greenock had recently visited. In the light of testimony offered by guardians Seymour described the attitude of Glasgow's welfare services as possessing a lack of humanity. She cited, for example, the insistence by Glasgow on 'a rigid code of rules enforced in a hard and fast dictatorial manner with little or no regard for the feelings of the foster parents or the emotional welfare of the children.'<sup>174</sup> Indeed, she was of the view that the visitation system should place greater emphasis on the 'joint interest in the child' held by a local authority and guardians and that a greater focus on offering support and guidance to guardians with respect to difficulties was required by the boarding-out authority. To this end she was in agreement with the Clyde Committee that 'local authority officers charged with the duty of selecting and inspecting foster homes should be specially chosen for their aptitude and should receive training.'<sup>175</sup> Seymour's report made the following observations:

- Difficulties and issues that had been raised with her by guardians had not been disclosed to Children's Inspectors from Glasgow and Greenock when they had undertaken their visits. Seymour noted 'Perhaps however this is not so surprising when one considers that these men are usually just given a period of this work as part of their public assistance training *so that presumably they have no special understanding of children and their needs*.'<sup>176</sup> (emphasis added)
- A number of foster parents were struggling to deal with enuretic children 'without much if any advice or help in dealing with this troublesome condition'.<sup>177</sup>
- The schoolmaster was well acquainted with each boarded out child and it was his view that 'with very few exceptions...all the boarded out children in his school at present were dull and backward in varying degrees'.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> NRS, ED11/294: Homeless Children: Inspection of Boarded Out Children- Glasgow Boarding Out System, Seymour, 'Boarding out in Crofts', p. 1.

<sup>175</sup> NRS, ED11/294: Homeless Children: Inspection of Boarded Out Children- Glasgow Boarding Out System; Seymour produced a two page letter including some general remarks on her visit and three page report, both are included in the file.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

- The difficulties in finding foster homes for Roman Catholic children. If 'the choice lies between living in rather overcrowded sub-standard crofts of this type or of being placed in a large institution such as Smyllum orphanage, I should unhesitatingly vote for the former provided the foster parents were the right sort of people.'<sup>179</sup>

Evidently, it was not only the location of foster homes that was at issue but how these were selected and the lack of appropriate engagement of inspectors with guardians. The remarks made by the headteacher to Seymour also indicate what may have been a common view of these children, that they were inherently lacking in intelligence and ability, a persistent and pejorative judgement that undoubtedly contributed (along with their remote location) to the poor educational outcomes for many boarded-out children in the period.

Two years later, in 1949, the Home Department gathered further testimony from 'Mr Gordon', likely one of the inspectors now employed by the Department's inspectorate. Gordon also committed his thoughts to paper following a visit to 16 foster homes containing 50 boarded-out children in Inverness-shire. The need for better training of boarding-out officers was again reiterated and Gordon pointed out that where the educational attainments of children were concerned, they often began with a handicap because many of the homes were so far away from a local school the children did not begin their education until age six and their day was made much longer by the long walks to and from the school. He also intimated that inspection of boarding-out conditions was a method of surveillance that had limitations given that visits 'can usually be anticipated accurately to a matter of a week or two'.<sup>180</sup> Moreover, visits by members of the Children's Committee always took place in the summer months.<sup>181</sup>

In 1951, in a report undertaken into boarding out in Arisaig and Morar (another area favoured by Glasgow), Miss Morrison, an inspector with the Scottish Home Department, observed the children were healthy and the guardians mostly kind. One

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> NRS, ED11/294: Homeless Children: Inspection of Boarded Out Children- Glasgow Boarding Out System; 2-page report, dated 6 December 1949, written by Mr Gordon who was based in the 'Edinburgh Department'.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.



Scottish Office official responding to this and the other reports was outspoken however in drawing Glasgow Corporation's attention to a number of concerns raised:

1. Of the 19 foster homes reported on in detail within, 10 foster-parents are widows or spinsters. In addition, the husband of another foster-parent is in the regular army. 2 of the 10 widows have an adult son living in the home.
2. Most of the foster-parents are middle aged & some are elderly (one is 86). These factors raise doubts as to the method of selection of foster-parents. No doubt many of these foster-parents have taken children over a period of years, but can it be said, for example, that Glasgow select a foster home as being suitable for a particular child? Is the character and needs of the individual child fully borne in mind before placing?
3. There is the impression that Glasgow's inspectors are rather perfunctory. The child may not even be seen by the inspector. Can it be said that the inspector really knows the child as an individual even after placing?
4. So far as employment is concerned, it seems fairly clear that Glasgow's inspectors are not in a position to discuss career prospects with a full knowledge of the child's abilities. In any event, discussion on these seems to be left until too late a stage...<sup>182</sup>

All these criticisms of the boarding-out system as it had long been practiced were given even more leverage in a report issued by the Committee on Boarding Out of the Scottish Advisory Council in 1950.<sup>183</sup> The Committee, set up specifically to investigate boarding out, came out in favour of this system over institutional care. However, they thought big changes needed to be made, particularly to the tradition of using country locations. The report mentions that in some rural parts of Scotland the number of boarded-out children might exceed the number of locally born children leading to the boarded-out youngsters being seen as a distinct group, rather than as part of the community. They recognised that though there can be no sudden change, authorities should gradually try to reduce the number of children sent to these areas. The Committee advised that the Secretary of State should intervene if authorities continued to create areas of boarding-out clustering.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> NRS, ED11/294: Report by J. Morrison, 'Boarding-out in Arisaig and Morar - July 1951'. This was a two page report, signed and dated 20 July 1951. Comments on this report by Ogilvie.

<sup>183</sup> Report of the Boarding-Out Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950), pp. 6-7.

<sup>184</sup> Report of the Boarding-Out Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950), pp. 6-7.

While the Committee on Boarding Out of the Scottish Advisory Council were considering their findings, they did intimate to the Home Department that a recruitment drive was necessary. This resulted in plans for a nationwide publicity campaign involving press conferences, the making of a promotional film, and giving encouragement to the BBC in Scotland to make a documentary.<sup>185</sup> Speakers were to be recruited, the Home Department planned to get the *Weekly Scotsman* to do a special feature in October 1950, and the churches were to be brought on board the publicity campaign, including the Roman Catholic church, owing to the special difficulty of finding foster homes for Catholic children. Lastly, an information leaflet (that could be handed out at meetings, after film shows, and the like) was to be prepared by the Scottish Information Office.<sup>186</sup> Evidence has not been recovered about whether all these plans came to fruition, but it certainly is the case that the Scottish press was awash in this period with advertisements and notices raising awareness of the need for new foster homes. The following example which appeared in the *Fifeshire Advertiser* is typical of the type:

An appeal is made by the Corporation of Glasgow for foster-parents for children who have been deprived of a normal home life through the loss of their parents, ill-treatment, neglect or other cause. There are about 3000 such children under the care of the Children's Department, and over 2000 of them are cared for in private homes, where they are brought up as one of the family and live the life of a normal, happy child. But there are still many in Corporation Homes and Institutions, and although these children are well cared for and have lots of recreation and entertainment, it is doubtful if an institution can make up for a real home and family life. It is felt that there are many who are fond of children and regret the lack of them in their homes, and it is to such people that the appeal is made. Not only would they be doing great public service in caring for a child, but they would derive great personal happiness from the work. Many foster-parents have brought up as many as twenty children in their day, and their labour of love has been amply rewarded by the success and affection of their large "families". A maintenance allowance is paid by the Children's Department for each child, and also an allowance for pocket money. In addition, provision is made for clothing, and in this respect care is taken to ensure that the child is at no disadvantage compared with his young companions. Every encouragement and educational advantage given where a child shows a bent for any particular career. The most urgent need is for foster-parents to care for

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<sup>185</sup> An interim report issued in 1949 recommended this move.

<sup>186</sup> NRS, ED11/426: Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care: Submission of Reports of Committees on Boarding-Out, After-Care & Homes. This contains various pieces of correspondence and internal minutes on the subject of the publication of the Advisory Council's reports.

baby boys and for small families. The Children's Officer, Corporation of Glasgow. 73 John Street, Glasgow, C.I. will be glad to receive applications and to furnish further particulars.<sup>187</sup>

As can be seen in the above notice, large authorities like Glasgow cast their net wide in the search for new boarded-out homes. In industrial Scotland, housing conditions for much of the population were of a very low standard; overcrowding was endemic and lack of indoor sanitation still common.<sup>188</sup> Therefore, finding suitable guardians and foster homes for such children was extremely difficult. The regulations issued in 1947 for boarding out were strident on what were acceptable conditions for homeless children. These stipulated that:

A child shall not be boarded-out or be allowed to remain

1) In a house which-

(a) is so situated or in such sanitary condition as to be injurious or dangerous to his health;

(b) having regard to available transport facilities, is not within reasonable walking distance of a school appropriate to his educational requirements;

(c) does not permit of suitable sleeping accommodation for the child in a room properly lit and ventilated

Furthermore, a child was not to be placed 'in any environment that is likely to be detrimental to the child', and unless a group of siblings, no more than three children were to board in any one home.<sup>189</sup> There was little chance that in Glasgow and much of the industrial central belt that an abundance of suitable homes conforming to these regulations might be found.

Available records for boarding-out practice by Glasgow reveal that in the years following the Children Act, the majority of children boarded within the city were living with relatives; in cases such as this, the rules regarding the type of accommodation permissible were probably relaxed.<sup>190</sup> However, this did not always

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<sup>187</sup> Fifehire Advertiser, 30 September 1950: 'Appeal for Foster-Parents', p. 1.

<sup>188</sup> See Abrams, L. and Fleming, L. (2010) 'Everyday Life in the Scottish Home' in Lynn Abrams and Callum Brown (Eds.), *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 50.

<sup>189</sup> Boarding Out Rules Scotland, Part II, para 10, p. 2.

<sup>190</sup> See for example, GCA D-Hew 24/60A: List of Children Boarded out by the Corporation of Glasgow at 1st June, 1949; this compilation was the last of its type, it lists all of the areas where children were

mean that the children would be suitably placed. The following case study illustrates the point.

#### Case Study IV: Sibling Group D: case of sisters boarded with elderly aunts in Glasgow<sup>191</sup>

In the early 1950s four siblings were referred to the Glasgow Town Clerk after the death of their mother in hospital. The children were being cared for by three aunts who lived together in a three-apartment tenement house in the city. The children remained with the aunts, the latter receiving an allowance of 13s 6d a week for each child and an annual clothing allowance of 16s for each. Just over a year later however, the oldest of the aunts who was past retirement age told the Children's Department that the children were 'too much for her'. The two younger aunts were unable to undertake full time care: one was in employment and the other sick. The children were transferred to one of Scotland's major providers of residential childcare. It is evident that the Children's Department permitted the siblings to remain with the aunts because this was a convenient solution to their care. Boarding out with relatives and in the city to boot was a solution that aligned with Clyde's recommendations and it would have been difficult to find a single foster home for all four children. However, there is no record in this case file of them ever being visited by a childcare officer whilst they were with the aunts. It is clear that the house was overcrowded with three adults and four growing children, and the aunts may not have been equipped or suited to looking after children.

#### Implementation of regulation and inspection

Despite Clyde and subsequent reports deprecating the boarding out of children in remote locations with elderly guardians, the day-to-day regulation and inspection of boarding-out arrangements continued to be governed by the Children (Boarding-Out, Etc.) (Scotland) Rules and Regulations, 1947 until 1959.

The 1947 regulations contain a number of key points which were designed to protect children, going further than the previous 1933 regulations and addressing to some degree the concerns of the Clyde Report. There were some omissions, though,

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boarded and includes the names of guardians and children: a clear minority were boarded within Glasgow and surnames indicate that the majority, if not quite all, guardians were related to the children. Specific relationships are not specified. From 1949, a broad round up of the locations where children were boarded is included in annual reports for the department.

<sup>191</sup> GCA, D-Hew 28/9/54: Out of care children born 1945 (the information about the siblings is drawn from the case file of just one of the children).

notably the failure to prohibit boarded-out children being put to work by their foster-parents on crofts and the relative lack of oversight of children boarded with relatives.<sup>192</sup> The key provisions within the 1947 rules and regulations relating to children's wellbeing and protection concerned the vetting of prospective foster parents, the suitability of the home in terms of space and comfort, the provision to board siblings together wherever possible, and the inspection requirements. The relevant paragraphs are as follows:<sup>193</sup>

#### *Vetting and placements*

- §10. All foster households were to be positively vetted and certain categories of foster parent were not admissible including those who relied for their income entirely on the payments made from taking in children and persons 'by reason of old age, infirmity, ill-health or other cause, is not fit to have care of the child.'
- §7. 'A local authority shall satisfy themselves by all necessary enquiries that any person whom they propose to select as a foster-parent for the care of boarded-out children is of good character and is in all respects fit to look after the health, education and general well-being of children.'
- §8. 'Before boarding out a child with a foster-parent, the local authority shall satisfy themselves that the foster-parent is a suitable foster-parent for that child.'

#### *Siblings*

- §9. 'So far as reasonably practicable, children of the same family shall be boarded-out in the same house'.

#### *Supervision and inspection*

- §14. 'Where a local authority board-out a child in their own area they shall arrange for his supervision by an officer of the authority duly appointed for the purpose or by some other reliable person resident in the locality where the child is boarded-out.'
- §15. 'Where a local authority board-out a child in the area of another local authority they shall arrange for his supervision by some reliable person

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<sup>192</sup> Norrie, Legislation Framework.

<sup>193</sup> Statutory Rules and Orders 1947: Boarded Out Children (Scotland).

resident in the locality in which the child is boarded-out, and in selecting such person shall consult with the local authority of that area.'

- §16. 'The boarding-out authority shall arrange that the person appointed to supervise a boarded-out child under Articles 14 and 15 hereof shall-
  - (a) report to them within three months of the boarding-out of the child [...];
  - (b) report immediately on any particular matter which in his or her view should be brought to the notice of the boarding-out authority.'
- §17. 'The local authority shall appoint an officer with experience and knowledge of social service for the purpose of assisting them in the performance of their functions under these Rules and Regulations, including the selection of foster-parents and the visitation of children boarded-out by the authority.'
- §18. 'The officer appointed under Article 17 hereof shall visit or cause to be visited by persons with suitable qualifications and experience every child boarded-out by the authority within one month of the boarding out of the child and thereafter at intervals of not more than six months. The authority shall also arrange that such children shall be visited by members of the authority at least once a year. The officer or members, as the case may be, shall furnish to the authority a report on each visit with respect to-
  - (a) the suitability of the foster-parent;
  - (b) the general conditions of the home;
  - (c) the number of other children in the house, keeping in view the requirements of Article 11 hereof;
  - (d) the sleeping arrangements for the child and the condition of his bed, bed-clothes and night apparel;
  - (e) the condition of the child's clothing;
  - (f) the child's general well-being and behaviour;
  - (g) the progress the child has made at school;
  - (h) the manner in which the child is occupied outwith school hours;
  - (i) any complaint made by, or concerning, the child; and

- (j) any other matters relative to the child's welfare which they consider should be reported.'

What was most significant here was the vetting provision, the allocation of a named individual to each child and the visiting and reporting regulations that aimed to ensure there was regular oversight of the child. It is notable however, that the items for report pertained mainly to physical and material wellbeing of the child and did not impose on inspectors the duty to speak with (or even see) the child or to ascertain the child's views.

It is of course easy to identify the rules and regulations governing the operation of the boarded-out system in Scotland. Evidence of how these were put into practice at local authority level is less visible in the written record.

### *Vetting of Foster Parents*

The Children (Boarding-Out, Etc.) (Scotland) Rules and Regulations, 1947 required more stringent selection of foster parents than had been laid down by the 1933 regulations. However, in the case of Glasgow at least, there is no evidence that continuing guardians were now vetted or that new guardians were subject to any rigorous assessment. Advertisements and notices inviting suitable women or couples to become foster parents were placed in the likes of the popular press and in the magazines of church groups and women's societies, and people responded to these. As we have seen, the regulations stipulated somewhat vaguely that authorities needed to satisfy themselves that such applicants were 'of good character'.<sup>194</sup> It is likely that brief letters of recommendation were all that was requested from prospective guardians, though examples of these have not been located in the historical record for this period. However, in the case of the deaths of two children in 1968 such letters of recommendation were produced and were criticised for being brief and couched in general terms.<sup>195</sup>

The notion that police checks might be made on applicants does seem to have been considered in 1948. Home Department records indicate that some precedent for this was sought in English practice. Archived documents reveal however, that plans in England and Wales to gather information from the police were somewhat stymied because of a case in Yorkshire when an officer refused to give details and at the Central Conference of Chief Constables for England and Wales held on the 17th June

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<sup>194</sup> Statutory Rules and Orders 1947: Boarded Out Children (Scotland), p. 2.

<sup>195</sup> See Part II of this Report; NRS, ED11-786 - Deaths of Children in Local Authority Care - Individual Cases.

1948, it was decided that any information given should be oral, not written down.<sup>196</sup> What seems to have been of concern is that information committed to paper concerning individuals might be shared indiscreetly among members of a local children's committee. The Scottish Home Department's response was that Scottish Chief Constables were independent and it was stated that generally they 'are not influenced by the deliberations of the Chief Constables of E & W but where there are no Scottish peculiarities it is customary for the Chief Constables of the two countries to think along the same lines.'<sup>197</sup> There seems to have been no resolution in Scotland to any proposed requirement for police reports though an official in the Home Department remarked that 'I have no doubt that in this matter our Scottish Chief Constables would be as helpful as possible.'<sup>198</sup>

When the regulations were reviewed in 1959, the appeal to make 'all necessary enquiries' of prospective guardians was simply repeated and once again police checks were not made mandatory.<sup>199</sup>

The manner by which children were placed with guardians is illustrated by the following case of a Glasgow boy brought into care in 1947.

#### Case Study V: Child E<sup>200</sup>

This child was taken into care in 1947 at the age of two having been abandoned by the mother. The RSSPCC petitioned for the child to be removed from the maternal grandparents. Child E was initially placed in a Glasgow Corporation children's home, before being boarded out to a female guardian in a Highland village. The child was visited 7 months later 'by members' (of the Children's Committee) who subsequently reported in the child's file: 'found home satisfactory, child has settled down well and seems to be quite happy here.' However, in January 1954, when the child was not quite nine years old, it was necessary to remove the child from this home as the guardian was in poor health and giving up the croft '[w]ant[ed] the child removed.'

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<sup>196</sup> NRS, ED11/391: Homeless Children: information supplied to Local Authorities about character of Foster Parents by Police. Extracts from the minutes of the Central Conference of Chief Constables for England and Wales held on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 1948.

<sup>197</sup> NRS, ED11/391: Homeless Children: information supplied to Local Authorities about character of Foster Parents by Police; the quotation is from an internal minute dated 1/7/1948.

<sup>198</sup> NRS, ED11/391: Homeless Children: information supplied to Local Authorities about character of Foster Parents by Police, handwritten note (undated).

<sup>199</sup> For an example, see Case Study VIII in this report, where a the foster father had a criminal conviction for theft.

<sup>200</sup> GCA, D-Hew 28/9/50-58.



A week later the case file reports: 'Mrs XX, by [Highland town] prepared to take the [child]' and Child E was transferred there the following month. While we cannot be sure that there were no assessments of the suitability of the second foster carer, it appears that the child was placed in the most convenient home in the locality with a guardian who had capacity. The medical inspection of the child which was undertaken in March of that year raised serious concerns. 'I am not too happy about this one' reported a local GP who likely had been called in to undertake the routine medical exam required for all boarded-out children, 'and it is not possible yet to give any firm opinion as to how the child will settle. Mrs XX is a kindly person but lacks any idea of cleanliness. Home lacks proper sanitary arrangements, this is not a good thing for young children.' Yet when the Corporation inspector visited and saw the child, he was unconcerned: 'sanitary arrangements same as on most crofts.' In any case, this guardian appeared to have difficulties disciplining the child and seems to have reported Child E to the RSSPCC who recommended transferral to a children's home 'or foster parents who exercise stricter supervision'. On being taken into a residential institution in the Highlands the child was transferred to another children's home run by Glasgow Corporation and less than a year later found a foster home (the child's third) on a Gaelic-speaking Hebridean island. Again, there is no information on the file to explain why the child was sent to a guardian in this remote location.

## **Inspection of Boarded-out children**

### **Frequency and reporting**

The issue of the frequency of visitation and inspection was a thorny one. So too was the matter of who should be responsible for this. Since the inception of boarding out in the nineteenth century, foster homes and the children placed there had been visited and inspected. In Glasgow's case this had always been done by their own inspectors, formerly under the parochial board system by specially appointed parish inspectors and subsequently by field officers employed by the boarding-out authority. From the 1930s through to the adoption of the Children Act, the children themselves were overseen by inspectors of health from the Scottish Office.<sup>201</sup> Such inspection was probably fairly perfunctory and directed at the physical wellbeing of children and the cleanliness of homes given the numbers involved. There was discussion about whether Scottish Office inspectors should continue to visit

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<sup>201</sup> Clyde Report, para. 19, p. 8.

boarded-out homes, but this notion was dismissed as unfeasible without a large increase in the staff of the Home Department inspectorate.<sup>202</sup>

Whilst the proposal had been mooted by the Scottish Office that inspections might be conducted by the authority in which the child was placed, and the 1947 regulations permitted this, the Advisory Committee on Boarding Out advised against this practice when they published their report in 1950.<sup>203</sup> The Committee recognised that while some local authorities had practised this option by using 'some reliable person' (the likes of clergymen, teachers and nurses) to review children, this practice might create resentments on the part of guardians who would likely take umbrage at this kind of 'snooping' by a local person.<sup>204</sup> In the months leading up to and shortly after the adoption of the Act, some authorities, such as Aberdeen city, also raised objections stating that the numbers of children in their care did not justify the appointment of an officer solely engaged in the duty of looking after children. They proposed instead combining the workload of the Children's Officer to include other public assistance duties.<sup>205</sup> An opinion was expressed by one civil servant however, that appeared to recognise the dilemma that this caused for local authorities who were concerned that they would not be able to attract suitable candidates, or offer them an appropriate salary for this level of workload:

It seems to me that the question might have to be agreed in relation to the necessity for a Children's Officer; & unless sending local authority are prepared to appoint the local authorities of the receiving areas to act as their agents, there will be little justification for the appointment of a Children's Officer in many local authorities in Scotland. (My view is that the serious waste of man power which arises from the supervision of children sent to the same receiving area by several local authorities is not defensible if the receiving area employs a skilled Children staff and is prepared to accept responsibility for the children in their area. They already accept responsibility for the education of such children.) The generally accepted view is that a local authority which is responsible for about 100 children requires a Children's Officer, unless that local authority delegates responsibility on an agency basis to another authority, in which case,

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<sup>202</sup> NRS, ED11/395: Homeless Children: Effect of the Children Act 1948 on the Responsibilities of Local Authorities and Consequential Effect of the Responsibilities of the Secretary of State; internal minutes, 1947.

<sup>203</sup> Report of the Boarding-Out Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 10.

<sup>204</sup> Report of the Boarding-Out Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 10.

<sup>205</sup> NRS, ED 11/315: Children Bill: Question of Children's Committees: note of meeting with Aberdeen council representatives, 25 March 1948.

the other local authority can justify an appointment. For this number of children, the Children's Officer would act also as the Boarding-out Officer.<sup>206</sup>

Nonetheless, at the same time as expressing such pragmatism, the Home Department evidently recognised that dilution of the role of the Children's Officer in such a way, or any encouragement given to local authorities to parcel off children to become their neighbours' problem, would not meet the requirements of the legislation.

While in small authorities a Children's Officer would do all the visiting of boarded-out children, in larger places such as Glasgow this became a dedicated role. In this context, Glasgow did generally adhere to the frequency of inspections as laid down in the 1947 boarding-out regulations: a visit to the child within a month of the placement (although in some cases this was not met probably because of the distances involved)<sup>207</sup> and thereafter at six-monthly intervals until 1959 when new boarding-out regulations increased the frequency to every three months.<sup>208</sup> The case files of children in care duly record the visits, though we have not located notes made contemporaneously by the inspectors in the field that presumably might have been more thorough than the brief notes recorded on the child's case file and which were probably made retrospectively on return to Glasgow. It is likely field officers would have maintained a notebook to record details of the children visited but although these do survive for the inspections undertaken by officers of the parochial board, they have not been identified in archival collections for the post-war period and it is likely they have been destroyed.<sup>209</sup>

Though most of the personnel who became employed on this task in Scotland during the late 1940s and 1950s might have experience of public assistance work that included provisions made for children, they received little or no accredited training for the particular skills involved with supervision of children—this was a vocation that was learned on the job. A draft Memorandum on Boarding Out drawn up by the Scottish Office in the run up to the Children Act in 1948 recommended that boarding-out officers required:

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<sup>206</sup> NRS, ED 11/315: Children Bill: Question of Children's Committees; minute dated 26 June 1948.

<sup>207</sup> For example, see GCA, D-Hew 28/9/46, child born 1944 was visited seven months after placement in the foster home in a village in Aberdeenshire.

<sup>208</sup> Children's case files document the dates of visits.

<sup>209</sup> For example, see GCA, D-HEW 24/1: Barony Parish Visitation Reports for 1883.

personality and training for this important work. She should have a natural sympathy and understanding of children and young people and method of approach which will win the confidence of both foster parent and child. [...] It is also important that she should be familiar with behaviour problems in children, of the physical and psychological development of children and adolescents, and be capable of a reliable assessment of the suitability of foster parents.<sup>210</sup>

Despite these aspirations for a trained cadre of boarding-out officers (and an assumption perhaps that women were most suited to this work), in 1952 representatives from local authorities themselves expressed concern at the lack of trained personnel for childcare work in Scotland.<sup>211</sup> And yet the Scottish Home Department explained that there was not a need for a boarding-out officer's course in Scotland because local authorities already had a significant pool of people who had experience of boarding out before the Children Act came into force.<sup>212</sup> With leadership by Scottish central government lacking on this issue, the result of this circular argument was that it led to no change. Instead of the introduction of formal training and qualifications, as would be adopted in England, the Scottish Home department promoted Refresher Courses for childcare workers between 1950 and 1952, one of which was for Children's Officers already involved in boarding out work. Each of these annual courses provided up to 25 places and ran for one week in Dundee.<sup>213</sup> It consisted of a short lecture course followed by discussions designed to provide opportunities for consideration of various aspects of boarding out. It is not evident from the historical record whether any of Glasgow's boarding-out officers attended these courses.

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<sup>210</sup> NRS, ED11/389: Draft of a Memorandum on Boarding Out, p. 10. This memorandum was prepared for publication, but was delayed, possibly because of post-war paper rationing and the heavy print-run demands at the time for publications by HMSO. By the time it was ready, the Advisory Council were about to publish their findings on boarding out and the memorandum was further held back in anticipation of what the Council might say. It is highly likely therefore, that this memorandum was not circulated beyond the Scottish Office; but it provides us with insights into what civil servants judged to be important advice about boarding out.

<sup>211</sup> NRS, ED11/379: Homeless Children: Financial Provisions for Training and Grants to Voluntary Homes Consultation with Local Authority; minutes of a meeting of an Advisory Committee set up to consider training. of Cities, 6th February 1952.

<sup>212</sup> NRS, ED11/379: Homeless Children: Financial Provisions for Training and Grants to Voluntary Homes Consultation with Local Authority; minutes of a meeting of an Advisory Committee set up to consider training. The committee was made up of representatives from local authority umbrella organisations i.e. Counties of Cities, Association of County Councils and the Convention of Royal Burghs. The meeting was attended by staff of the Home department and held on 6th February 1952.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid. Information contained within documents attached to meetings of the above committee.

However, there is also much evidence of children being visited by city councillors. The councillors who undertook the visits—both to boarded-out children and to those in residential care—were undertaking the work as part of their Children’s Committee remit and it seems this duty was designed to aid their understanding of the service they oversaw.<sup>214</sup> Their remarks on children’s files tend to be brief. There is some evidence to suggest that within Glasgow’s children’s department there was a belief also that constant official visits to foster homes by officers and members was detrimental to the success of the placement.<sup>215</sup> The Scottish office also thought it might deter people from coming forward to do the job.<sup>216</sup> Such views may have influenced a hands-off approach regardless of official standards laid down by the Act.

Notes from inspection visits to boarded-out children were recorded in the child’s case file. These notes are often short and formulaic in content and presentation. They record dates of visits and brief remarks on the condition of the child and the condition of the home as well as any remarks made by the guardian and sometimes others consulted such as the child’s headteacher. Records comment on a child’s physical appearance (well-nourished, clean, appropriately clothed or dirty, dishevelled), their emotional demeanour (sullen, quiet or happy and chatty) and their performance at school in terms of scholarly (non-) achievements and behaviour. They attempt to give an objective assessment of the child that nevertheless is affected by the subjective attitudes of the childcare officer, and only in the negative comments made can any intimations be detected that the childcare officer was alert to the fact that the child might not be happy or flourishing. A poor outcome for a placement might be indicated by the recording of unsatisfactory levels of cleanliness in the home or some dislike of the officer for the guardian being noted. In other words, it appears that superficial, impressionistic observation stood in for in-depth analysis based on close examination of the child. However, this is hardly surprising when—as was often the case—the child was not seen, or barely seen.

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<sup>214</sup> Report of the Boarding-Out Committee, p. 10.

<sup>215</sup> See for example, GCA, D/OM/24: The Corporation of Glasgow Review of Children’s Department (September 1962), p. 14 in which the increase in visitation required by new regulations from 6-monthly to quarterly is regretted by Operations and Methods reviewers who describe the new schedule as ‘excessive’, causing extra administrative expense and possible jeopardy to the placement. It is stated that too frequent visitation ‘might impede the development of the foster parent as the child’s main point of security. The Children’s Officer is of the same opinion...’.

<sup>216</sup> Report of the Boarding-Out Committee, pp. 8-9.

When inspectors did report on concerning behaviours in children such as bedwetting, staying out, disruptive behaviour at school and so on, these were commonly interpreted as problems for the guardian. We elaborate on such issues in section 4.5. In such circumstances, it was not uncommon for guardians to request the removal of children in their care, especially older children, on the grounds that they were 'difficult' or becoming too much to handle. In this period, that is prior to 1968, we have not identified any cases of children in boarding out placements being referred for psychiatric treatment or other forms of support.<sup>217</sup> In just one case we have identified a sympathetic and understanding professional—a doctor—who quite likely correctly diagnosed a child's chronic history of bedwetting as caused by his 'sense of insecurity' but the problem continued with the childcare officer recommending that the young man should desist from consuming liquids after 6pm and to get up every two hours in the night as a cure.<sup>218</sup>

Some examples from a random sample of children's case files illustrate the brevity of these reports on inspection visits in this period but also the language used to describe the children by guardians and teachers which provide an insight into pervasive attitudes to boarded-out children. The reports on visits indicate a) that the visits occurred and b) that the field officers were reporting on what was required of them under the 1947 regulations. They also, perhaps unwittingly, demonstrate that frequently children were not seen at all and that officers took the views of other adults at face value.

'Boy seen at home. Seems good health. Quite well dressed and clean. House clean and tidy. Beds and bedding good.'<sup>219</sup>

'happy go lucky, no trouble in school'<sup>220</sup>

'wetting the bed. No reason for this apart from laziness'<sup>221</sup>

'Good clean home' 'Quite a bright lad' 'truthful and obedient'<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> It is however, important to note that we have only sampled a few case files owing to the constraints on time for the research.

<sup>218</sup> GCA D-Hew 28/9/54: Out of care children born 1945.

<sup>219</sup> GCA, D-Hew 28/9/51: Out of care children born 1945.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> GCA D-Hew 28/9/54: Out of care children born 1945.

'on the hill after sheep'<sup>223</sup>

'out'<sup>224</sup>

There is very little evidence in the reports from this period examined for this study that suggests that inspectors actively elicited children's views. This did change after the implementation of the Social Work Act 1968 when children were assigned their own social work case workers in line with legislation.

The issue of disclosure is a difficult matter to address historically.<sup>225</sup> The records reviewed indicate that some visits may have been fleeting and do not, for this period, provide evidence that children were free to reveal their feelings.<sup>226</sup> However, the oral testimony of 'Peter' a former boarded-out child interviewed in 1997 about his experience of being boarded out in the Highlands between 1938 and 1950, offers a first-hand account albeit many years later, of his own experience of the Corporation's visits:

I mean Glasgow Corporation they sent an inspector once a year or something. They always must have told them when they were coming. They didn't arrive out of the blue. So we were all lined up the day beforehand and warned when the inspector asks you whether you like it here you'll tell him yes or you'll get another hammering. So of course when the inspector 'how do you like it here, do you like it here?' 'Oh yes', you know, you daren't say anything else, you were, it was, I don't know what you would, we'd no will of our own. I mean you never queried, you never said why or wherefore, you were told to do something and you just did it. You know it was immediate obedience, you don't ask or if you dared to do that it was another hammering...<sup>227</sup>

Officers were supposed to form a friendly relationship with the child and the guardian (see section 4 of this report), but at least in the period up to the late 1960s the large numbers of children and foster homes to be visited by the small number of Glasgow officers must have militated against any in-depth knowledge of individual children. The brief comments in children's files noted above are evidence of this.

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> GCA, D-Hew 28/9/53: Out of care children born 1945.

<sup>225</sup> See L. Delap. 'Disgusting details'.

<sup>226</sup> See R. Fivush, "'Speaking Silence": the social construction of silence in autobiographical and cultural narratives', in *Memory* 18:2 (2010), pp. 88-98.

<sup>227</sup> Interview with 'Peter' (pseudonym) conducted by L. Abrams, 1997. Transcript in Scottish Oral History Archive, University of Strathclyde.



While those charged with visiting children were there to oversee their general welfare, they were not expected to act as advocates for the personal views of the children themselves. In this respect the inspection regime served to perpetuate the system of boarding out that subordinated children's views and wellbeing in the need to maintain Glasgow's prime means of finding homes for the scores that came into its care each year. Inspection did reveal mistreatment on all levels from inappropriate work required of children, especially on crofts, to inadequate food, lack of attention to children's emotional needs and on occasions, physical mistreatment. But as in the case of Child E detailed below, intimations of poor care could be passed over by inspectors (sometimes explained away as typical of the crofting way of life) as were behaviours such as running away, stealing, and bedwetting which, as we have noted elsewhere, may not have been understood by child care officers as potential signals of emotional distress.

#### Case Study VI: Child F <sup>228</sup>

The case of Child F who was admitted to care as an infant in the mid-1940s and remained in the care of the local authority—Glasgow—until discharge at the age of 18 is indicative of how the inspection regime could fail despite meeting legal requirements. Following a disruptive early childhood when he was looked after in a local authority children's home for several years, but frequently spent periods of time in hospital, he was boarded out with a family in the central belt where he was described in reports as 'happy and well' and as 'a bright lad, open, well mannered.' But just over two years later he was removed from that happy environment to a foster carer on a farm in the north east of Scotland to allow him to be boarded with some of his siblings. He received regular visits from the Glasgow boarding-out officer and reports were positive although his schoolwork was noted as poor. However, on reaching his teens, the guardian requested the removal of two children from this family including this child on the grounds that he 'had been misbehaving and had become very disobedient and impertinent.' Following this, when the officer next visited, the local headmaster is quoted as having given the following information:

Clothing adequate but often dirty and inadequately cared for. Suspect excessive employment on the farm morning and night and have doubts about feeding. Goes home at mid-day but frequently is on the look-out for 'leftovers' from

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<sup>228</sup> GCA, D-Hew 28/9/46. (CLOSED?)

school dinners on his return to school. School and home-work very untidy—given little encouragement. Not a happy boy!

There appears to have been no follow-up on these concerns in subsequent inspection visits, but the warning signs were abundant. The child regularly failed to return home from school in the evenings, and on one occasion was found hiding in a garden shed by the headmaster who was reported to be 'cooking for the boy'. He was removed a few months later and sent to a children's home, run by Glasgow Corporation. Once there he began to get into trouble for theft and absconding, a pattern that continued when he moved to a working boys' home and then lodgings.

This child's story was a complicated one—as a young boy he had experienced a happy initial foster placement, but the record for his care appears to indicate his removal to be with his siblings was not successful. We can extrapolate that his subsequent behaviour, which his guardian found so challenging, may have stemmed at least as much from this disruptive experience as his earlier life in a children's home though the record is silent on the causes of his unhappiness. His initial foster parents had maintained contact with him after his removal and records reveal that he regarded this foster mother as 'his real mum'. The inspection system responded not necessarily to the child's needs, but moved him around the system from pillar to post, as a problem to be sorted out in accordance with statutory rules. At no time was any doubt expressed about the character of the second foster family though the foster father freely admitted to using corporal punishment on him on at least one occasion because of his tendency to run off. Notes in the case file give no real insights into whether the reasons for this boy repeatedly absconding were given serious consideration in terms of his welfare.

This child, like several others, was removed from his guardians at their request. He had become too difficult for them to handle in his teenage years. This was not an uncommon circumstance and is indicative of the way the system (and guardians) was prioritised over children's needs in this period. Many guardians were of advancing years and were unable to cope with teenage children who presented challenging behaviours, especially for elderly female carers.

## Removals

Removals of children from unsuitable guardians would be one indication that the inspection system was working. Yet it appears that few children were removed from unsuitable guardians at the instigation of inspectors though numbers are impossible

to quantify as we have not located a central record in the archive. However, a removal of a child in these circumstances was reported to the Children's Committee and any such change in a child's situation was supposed to be reported to the Scottish Home Department under the 1947 regulations. It is unclear from the surviving written record how this operated in practice. We have not identified a 'black list' of unsuitable guardians in Scottish Office records for this period, nor any associated prosecutions. That children were only removed in extreme circumstances reflected Glasgow's need for guardians. As the cases described above illustrate, inspectors' thresholds for unsuitable living conditions and childcare standards were high.

It was generally believed that a child was better off in a foster home than in a residential institution.<sup>229</sup> The annual reports produced by Glasgow's Children's Department detail the number of children removed annually; the reasons given are broken down into two groups: those removed because of a change in circumstance for the guardian (ill-health etc.) or behaviour difficulties in the child. The record reveals that by far the main reason for removal was the latter.<sup>230</sup>

The 1955-56 report, for example, claims that of 162 children newly boarded out that year, only eight had to be returned. Of these, two were removed because of illness experienced by guardians.<sup>231</sup> In the following year, 1956-57, the number of children newly boarded out increased to 225. According to this report eight children were removed—six on account of unspecified 'behaviour difficulties', one because of 'signs of mental retardation' and one when the guardian became ill.<sup>232</sup> The low level of reported removals was a matter for celebration in such reports and doubtless aimed to demonstrate that Glasgow was doing its best by deprived children in carefully selecting guardians who could provide happy and secure homes for vulnerable youngsters. The provision of slightly more detail about boarding out failures, to include the possibility that children simply could not settle, was initiated in the 1957-8 report though this was a short-lived experiment and did not outlast 1960, after

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<sup>229</sup> For example see GD534/12/5/4: Report of the Boarding-Out Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 17 though this conclusion reflected the views of the Clyde Committee.

<sup>230</sup> GCA, Glasgow Corporation Minutes vol: C1/3/120: Children's Committee Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1949 (pp. 427-8) - Removal of boarded-out children—Report by Children's Officer.

<sup>231</sup> The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Seventh Annual Report 1955-1956, p. 10.

<sup>232</sup> The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Eighth Annual Report 1956-1957, p. 10.

which an admission that the department *might* have mismatched children to guardians simply disappeared from annual accounts.

At this point, changes had recently been implemented to promote more short-term fostering, and it is probable that with this, a new type of guardian began to emerge who exercised more choice about the children they would accept. By 1960, the number of removals climbed steeply to thirty children. Of this number only three were returned because of the guardian's personal circumstances. All others were because of behaviour problems (17 children), suspected 'mental retardation' (two children) or, in eight cases, simply because these children could not settle.<sup>233</sup> The annual report for this year strongly infers that one possible reason for this increase was the number of mixed race children who were coming into care and the children's department defended their position by citing that this was 'a problem' that was becoming 'more pressing' and was 'by no means peculiar to Glasgow' and that the authority tried hard to find suitable homes for these children.<sup>234</sup>

Subtle shifts in the relationship Glasgow children's department had with foster parents might be concluded from this type of evidence. The days of sending children to the Highlands to homes that had a long relationship with Glasgow Corporation were ending—albeit this was something of a protracted end. Yet this shift did not necessarily signal real improvements for many foster children. According to all types of guidance and regulations, local authorities were supposed to have the needs of the child foremost in mind when allocating a foster family, but given that demand always outstripped supply, there is reason to doubt that allocations were always so carefully made. There is certainly reason to doubt the statistics for returns presented by Glasgow. Annual reports produced in both the public and private sectors were meant to inform but also served a public relations function. We know from children's case files that some children were not formally 'removed', rather they were simply moved on to another guardian. It is almost certain that such children were not counted in these statistics. There was likely pressure on social workers to avoid the scenario of returning children to a residential home. These places generally operated at capacity and return to one left open the possibility that it would prove impossible to find another foster home for the child. This is yet another reason why tried and tested foster homes in the Highlands were slow to be abandoned.

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<sup>233</sup> The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Eleventh Annual Report 1959-1960, p. 10.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

In 1958, one official at the Scottish Office commented in an internal memo that 'it seems to me that a child in a [Children's] Home is in less danger of receiving excessive punishment than a child in a foster home.'<sup>235</sup> The official historical record contained in the case files of boarded-out children selected at random for this study suggest little that would alert us to the perpetration of what would have been considered at the time as unacceptable ill-treatment (abuse as it has come to be known in more recent times) of children by guardians. As noted, children were sometimes removed from guardians and we might surmise that in some of these cases abuse was suspected or identified. The circumstances of Child F described above are suggestive of the child being beaten and underfed but his removal to Glasgow was on the back of a complaint by his foster carer. There is no evidence contained in the file of the child verbally complaining of poor treatment to the authorities or the boarding-out officer being concerned at the child's appearance or demeanour, though his behaviour might be interpreted as a signal of mistreatment.

Prosecutions of guardians for mistreatment reported in the press are the clearest evidence we have for the abuse of boarded-out children in this period. The high-profile case in 1945 of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were severely beaten by their guardians John and Margaret Walton in Fife was not an isolated incident. A search of the local press in Scotland has identified a number of prosecutions of guardians for 'cruelty'. For example, also in 1945, a farmer in Aberdeenshire pleaded not guilty to a charge of wilful assault (a thrashing with a leather belt) on a boy who had been boarded out with him by East Lothian Council.<sup>236</sup> What is striking in these, and other such cases is that the cruelty was not identified by the local authority boarding out inspector but rather by other responsible adults: in these instances teachers, the police, and the RSSPCC. This is a pattern that we will see repeated in the case of children mistreated in children's homes and in foster care in the 1960s.

## The Cost of Care

The elephant in the room where the preference for boarding out is concerned is that in relative terms it was cheaper than residential care. While well-meaning advisors to

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<sup>235</sup> NRS, ED11/513: The Children Acts: Discipline and Punishment, Home Department internal minute about corporal punishment, dated 17 December 1958.

<sup>236</sup> Aberdeen Press and Journal, 29 Sept. 1945, p. 3. For further discussion of this case in the context of attitudes towards boarded out children see Section 4.5.

the Secretary of State may have been able to overlook this fact, local authorities certainly did not. The provision of residential care simply cost more: in 1949, Glasgow expenditure on childcare looked like this:

ORDINARY EXPENDITURE:

Maintenance of Children with Foster-Parents	£139,949
Maintenance of Children in Homes	£111,450
Payments to Other Local Authorities	£3,311
Payments to Voluntary Organisations	£330
Adoption of Children (excluding administration)	£171
Remand Home	£8,666
Administration Charges	£29,269
TOTAL	£290,166. <sup>237</sup>

Although the largest single item of expenditure in this budgetary statement is for boarding out, this reflects the fact that in this period the great majority of children were dealt with by this route—in 1949, some 2,072 children were being fostered and 834 residing in some other form of residential care (this number excluding children in ‘after-care’).<sup>238</sup> From such sums we can clearly deduce that boarding out was a more cost-effective means of caring. With an eye to their budget and the views of the electorate on public spending, local politicians had every reason, therefore, to continue to promote boarding out.

Moreover, while all forms of care were subsidised to some extent by compulsory, means-tested contributions by parents (including single mothers), and for some forms of expenditure through grants made by central government, the amounts paid out to guardians were not regulated to be uniform. In their first annual report, Glasgow claimed to be paying ‘17s 6d, per week and in addition, pocket money on the following scale as allowed—children 2-4 years, 6d; children 5-9 years, 9d; children 10-12 years, 1s; children 13-school leaving age, 1s 6d.’ With clothing either supplied from a central store or ‘if desired by the foster parent, a cash allowance’ of between

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<sup>237</sup> Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children’s Department: First Annual Report 1949-50, p. 15.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.



£10 and £15 per annum depending on the age of the child.<sup>239</sup> Yet, other available records for 1949 reveal that even where variations caused by different amounts of pocket money paid are taken into account, there was a difference in the amounts of aliment paid monthly to individual guardians for a single child.<sup>240</sup> The various minutes of meetings of the Children's Committee do indicate that occasionally extra allowances might be granted for things like bicycles (so that children could get to and from school in rural areas) and extra bedding, though these were one-off payments rather than regular additions. The lack of uniformity is detailed in payments designated in 1949, which could range between roughly 60s and 80s per month for a child boarded to remote areas. By 1952, the standard allowance had risen by 2s 6d per week to 20s; and it remained at this rate until October 1954 when it was raised to 25s.<sup>241</sup>

Councils were always cash-strapped, and these financial facts cannot be eliminated from consideration. Moreover, some competition was present in the field with local authorities all paying different amounts. In 1951, Aberdeen paid 17s 6d per week for care, but towards the end of the year raised this to 22s. 6d. Thus, they were paying more than Glasgow at the time—a competitor for homes in the north east counties.<sup>242</sup> The notion that foster carers might undertake this task for the money was deprecated by both the Clyde Committee and the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care who saw guardianship of children as a civic good that must be performed by right-minded people. The Advisory Council's Committee on Boarding Out also recognised that variation existed in payments to foster carers between different local authorities. The Committee on Boarding Out commented on the issue of authorities competing in this way to obtain guardians. They advised in 1950 that rates must be uniform, with extra payment for special needs and circumstances and urged local authorities to take 'early steps' to discuss this matter.<sup>243</sup> The question of whether boarding out allowances should include an element of remuneration was discussed regularly by interested parties because of the difficulty of recruiting sufficient foster parents; but this was always rejected by those charged with giving advice in 1950s

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>240</sup> See GCA, D-Hew 24/60A: List of Children Boarded out by the Corporation of Glasgow at 1 June, 1949.

<sup>241</sup> See Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Third Annual Report 1951-52, p. 10; and Fifth Annual Report, p. 8.

<sup>242</sup> Aberdeen Evening Express 5 October 1951: 'Foster Parents', p. 5.

<sup>243</sup> Report of the Boarding-Out Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 11.



Scotland.<sup>244</sup> Payments did rise throughout the decade, but the belief that monetary reward should not be offered as an incentive was held fast in the hope that only truly altruistic guardians would be attracted to the job—many who came forward undoubtedly did fit this bill and did not need the extra income nor were they motivated by this in their desire to undertake fostering. Yet at the other end of the scale are those guardians we know existed who were quite unsuitable for the task, but still performed it and there cannot be any other explanation that they did this principally for material gain.

Boarding-out officers had the task of discriminating between the two groups. In 1960, Glasgow Children's Department brought in notaries when it was discovered that a guardian had been fraudulently claiming the allowance for a child who had been in employment for some time. This was a case of disastrously poor decision-making in the matter of accommodating this child, including boarding him with a woman who was far from being an upright citizen and quite clearly exploited a particularly vulnerable child. His career in care ended with him being sent to an Approved School in the early 1960s.<sup>245</sup>

## **Policies on Boarding Out, 1959-1969**

### **1959 Regulations**

As the 1960s dawned a new raft of legislation and statutory instruments aimed to refine and improve on earlier attempts to make the boarded-out system fit for purpose. First of these was a new set of regulations issued in 1959. In tandem, the Secretary of State issued a *Memorandum on Boarding Out* which both reiterated and spelled out in some detail the aspirations of the boarded-out system and issued detailed advice on how the new regulations should be interpreted. It was designed to provide 'in a convenient form general guidance to Children's Committees, childcare officers, and others concerned with the welfare of children.' It was also sent to voluntary organisations to encourage them to make greater use of boarding out. These initiatives reflected the persistence of the view that this was the best method available for caring for children deprived of a normal home life.

The Memorandum restated the principles of boarding out, was responsive and sensitive to both children and foster parents whilst also containing much advice

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<sup>244</sup> See NRS, ED11/515; Allowances.

<sup>245</sup> GCA, D-Hew28/9/54: Out of care children born 1945.

regarding the selection of foster carers (advising against placing with elderly foster parents who would request a child's removal before school leaving age) and on the handling of children who invariably had suffered emotional upset. It also emphasised the need for suitably qualified and experienced childcare officers and contained a statement on the relationship between the foster parent, the foster family, the boarding-out officer and the child. This advice included the recommendation that the recording of visits, while it needed to be concise should not be presented in children's records as formulaic, one-line statements.<sup>246</sup>

Unfortunately, authorities like Glasgow, with around 2,000 children boarded out across the country, struggled to meet many of the expectations of the memorandum. For instance, it was recommended that the boarding-out officer establish a 'friendly relationship' with the foster parent that could not be created by 'hurried visits to the foster home nor by seeing the foster mother alone in the home and then the child for a few minutes in school.' Indeed, it was recommended that '[t]he child and the foster parents should be seen in their full family relationship although during the visit the boarding out officer should try tactfully to have a talk with the child alone.'<sup>247</sup> Certainly there is little indication in the written record in Glasgow that officers were able to spend time developing this kind of relationship with foster parents and children. Such were the financial and staffing pressures on Glasgow's Children's Department that officers were hard pressed to visit all of the boarded-out children at the newly required frequency of every three months, increased from the previous requirement for six-monthly visits. When we review case files of children in care during this period we can see that according to regulations, three-monthly visits were usually put in place, but not consistently.

By this date, there was also widespread understanding that such children were likely to have physical or psychological needs because of their early experiences and separation from their birth parents. The Memorandum is explicit on this aspect, commenting that foster parents should not expect children to settle immediately and it was essential that the boarding-out officer have all relevant information to hand regarding a child's needs and if need be solicit reports from psychologists or child guidance, before selecting a foster home. Moreover, the Memorandum recommended children be introduced to their foster parents gradually through

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<sup>246</sup> NRS, ED11/514: Scottish Home Department, Memorandum on the Boarding Out of Children (Edinburgh, 1959).

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

several short visits before permanent placement to avoid '[t]he "collecting" of children from children's homes and their "delivery" to the foster homes by an officer other than the boarding out officer.' <sup>248</sup>

There is only limited acknowledgement in the document that placements might break down and no explicit mention of the potential for mistreatment or abuse (apart from a statement regarding foster parents requiring children to undertake work). The Memorandum admitted that some placements might be unsuccessful, and a child removed owing to unhappiness. In the 'specimen statement of principles' to be provided to all guardians, they were encouraged to provide comfort and affection rather than scolding and punishment when children expressed anxiety through bed wetting and other manifestations of emotional distress.<sup>249</sup> It is not known if this schedule containing the statement of principles was provided to all foster parents. However, the dominant view, yet again, was that if the child was properly matched with the foster home there was every likelihood of success. The implication (though not explicitly stated) was that abuse was aberrant. Heightened focus on careful selection of foster carers, a close relationship between the boarding-out officer, the foster carer and the child, and ensuring that all foster parents were aware of the principles governing care of children, was supposed to guarantee that only a few bad apples would be likely to mistreat the children in their care. Having said this, the 1959 Regulations *did* give the care authority or the voluntary organisation the power to 'terminate the boarding-out of a child with a particular foster parent if it appears to them that it is no longer in the best interests of the child to be boarded-out with that foster parent.'<sup>250</sup>

The 1959 Memorandum had good intentions regarding improvements to foster care, but its implementation was dependent on the capacity of Children's Departments to carry out the additional work required to ensure the child was well matched with guardians and was receiving all the support he or she needed.

### [Towards prevention and reorganisation](#)

During the year 1960-1961, Glasgow received 'well over 2000' applications for assistance with children; and the city had 900 foster carers on its books, including

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., Appendix, pp. 24-5.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

those who were kin to the children concerned.<sup>251</sup> By the end of May 1961, 2,583 were under the care of the Corporation in some way and within this total, 1,355 were boarded out to foster parents.<sup>252</sup> In terms of personnel, in addition to the Children's Officer, his deputy and clerical staff, the Children's Department had only one Senior Child Care Officer, 13 Child Care Officers, and 3 assistant officers (possibly trainees) engaged both with placement and supervision of children boarded out and housed in residential care.<sup>253</sup> In the early 1960s, although efforts had been made to reduce the trend, Glasgow still had large numbers of children boarded some distance from the city. These general conditions, combined with this level of staffing, placed formidable constraints on the ambition to somehow reform the system of placement and supervision of boarded-out children.

Inspectors from the Scottish Education Department were active in visiting facilities run by Glasgow's Children's Department throughout the 1960s; this perhaps reflecting the knowledge that the city was struggling to keep up with its childcare responsibilities. By early 1963, the Children's Officer, who had been in post since 1949, retired and his Deputy took over.<sup>254</sup> As one inspector noted at the time, 'Mr McLeish has inherited many problems in his appointment as Children's Officer and will need all the encouragement, guidance and support we can give him to see the needs of the service as a whole and to plan accordingly'.<sup>255</sup> The occasion for this reflection was a meeting held to discuss the potential expansion of one of Glasgow's residential homes, but SED inspectors advised that instead of changes to Homes, two new officers should be employed to increase the level of boarding out. In response, Glasgow bowed to this pressure and employed one new officer. This example of a discussion with central government over how to improve services and the results it garnered provides a snapshot view of the troubles faced by Glasgow's Children's Department over the course of the 1960s, and the inadequate response made to these by the local authority. Increased demand meant a need for increased services and the employment of more trained staff, but the resources available were never

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<sup>251</sup> Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Twelfth Annual Report 1960-1961, p. 3.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>254</sup> Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Fourteenth Annual Report 1962-1963, p. 3.

<sup>255</sup> NRS, ED11/525/2: Glasgow: Eversley Children's Home; minutes recording a meeting between the Chief Inspector and the Convenor of Glasgow Children's Committee held on 26/11/1963, the minute is dated 10/12/1963. CLOSED FILE.

enough to meet overall needs. New regulations and advice were unable to provide any answers to this conundrum.

In this period, other changes in the philosophy underpinning childcare were, at least in part, a consequence of the poor outcomes obtained for many children. We have already noted the encouragement given by the Scottish Office during the 1950s to increase preventative strategies—a tacit acknowledgment that taking children into care was *very* often not the solution to children’s needs. The ongoing cajolement of local authorities to properly embrace this philosophy culminated in an Inquiry and, ultimately, in new legislation.

The Kilbrandon Inquiry was commissioned in 1961 and reported in 1964. A predecessor, somewhat eclipsed by the fame later accrued to Kilbrandon, was another inquiry—the McBoyle Inquiry—headed by the then Chairman of the Advisory Council on Child Care. Its remit was to report on whether local authorities in Scotland needed more powers to effect improved care for neglected children. It reported in 1963.<sup>256</sup> This report was clear in identifying the failures of local authority co-ordination as a means of effecting prevention; it also commented on the insufficient numbers of trained social workers within children’s services.

The coalescence of McBoyle’s findings with larger inquiries conducted in England (principally Ingelby, 1960) led to the Children and Young Person’s Act, 1963. The findings of McBoyle ensured that Scotland was included within the scope of this Act.<sup>257</sup> This legislation had profound consequences for many children. The Act made it a *duty* for local authorities across the UK to promote the welfare of children using a raft of means that diminished the need to take them into care. A consequence of this in Scotland, was to increase the workload of Children’s Departments. The administration of prevention strategies demanded more officers to deal with the increased traffic caused by the needs of children being brought to the attention of Children’s Officers by other arms of local government and health and welfare agencies, as well as greater skill in decision making about whether or not to admit children into care or implement preventative measures instead. Perhaps even more to the point in this context, was the fact that this added responsibility placed further financial demands on local councils that did not always meet with the approval either of councillors or the wider public. Help given to problem families often included the

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<sup>256</sup> The Report of the Committee on the Prevention of Neglect of Children (Edinburgh, 1963); commonly known as the McBoyle Report.

<sup>257</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services: the Scottish Dimension*, pp 112-3 & 119.

clearing of rent arrears to prevent homelessness and assistance with non-payment of fuel bills. While it was expected that families would repay such allowances over a stipulated period, for families in poverty repayment was a vain hope. In 1966, during an inspection of the work being done in Glasgow one SED inspector described the debt collection performed by a childcare officer as 'sordid and discouraging'.<sup>258</sup> Large Children's Departments could easily find themselves in conflict with their councils wherein residual attitudes towards the poor still resided. The period in the run up to 1963 and immediately following brought the stresses of Glasgow's Children's Department to a head.

In response, an internal review of the work of Glasgow Children's Department was conducted. This identified a number of problems but overall its conclusions were not solely, or even mainly, aimed at noting where more investment was needed; rather it was about making better use of available resources. Given that existing capacity was stretched to its maximum, the review's attempts at re-structuring failed to address the serious underlying problems with children's services and is replete with commentary such as the following:

Since Article 13 of the Boarding-Out of Children (Scotland) Regulations, 1959 prescribes that these children be visited at least four times yearly, considerable travelling time and expense is incurred by child care officers whose complement is inflated accordingly. Whilst we are of the opinion that quarterly visits are unnecessary in the vast majority of cases, it is unlikely that the Secretary of State would entertain proposals for the Corporation to reduce them...<sup>259</sup>

In a complete misunderstanding of the aim of new regulations imposed and subsequent advice given, the review recommended that childcare officers concerned with boarding out and employed by Glasgow could become resident in the north of Scotland and that the duties of officers in boarding out sections and adoption sections might be combined in order that the possibility of adoption might 'occupy a more prominent place in their minds'.<sup>260</sup> Reviewers were also scathing about the amount of time officers spent on record keeping. Officers were accused of being too 'verbose' and it was asserted that in

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<sup>258</sup> NRS, ED11/669/2: Child Care Arrangements—Glasgow Children's Department; quotation from the 'assessment' made by an inspector when reviewing the duties performed by an officer working specifically in the Admission and Prevention section of the Glasgow department in 1966. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>259</sup> GCA, D-OM-24: Corporation of Glasgow Review of Children's Department, Operations & Methods September 1962, p. 1.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

a successful fostering there should be little to record other than the fact of the visitation and a word picture of 2-3 lines; and child care officers should be instructed to avoid unnecessary narrative as being not only wasteful of time but also making subsequent study of the case more difficult.<sup>261</sup>

In the 1965-6 annual report, the chairman of the Children's Committee commented with some degree of understatement that it had been a year of 'increasing pressure'.<sup>262</sup> Without wider research, beyond the scope of this study, it is impossible to know how far new regulations and more specific advice, not to mention the legislation enacted, had any positive effect on the experiences of children boarded out across Scotland in this period. But in Glasgow at least, prevention does not seem to have cut the numbers of children entering or remaining in foster care; one reason for this may have been the greater trend towards shorter-term and more local fostering that preventative measures ushered in.<sup>263</sup> Often children had to be separated from their families for a time in order to stabilise a critical situation; rather than depend on residential care, foster care was once again looked at as a better method of dealing with this. But if preventative measures had positive effects for some children and their families, the increased pressure on resources incurred by this must also have had negative effects on care delivery within all parts of the childcare system.

Even before the adoption of the 1963 Act, Glasgow had restructured the organisation of the Children's Department to incorporate prevention, introducing a structure that basically had three parts: admissions and prevention; supervision of children boarded out (further split into 2 sections for children sent outside of Glasgow and children placed in the city), and adoptions. By 1965-66, when a major inspection of the department and all its services took place, by prior arrangement between the department and the SED inspectorate,

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>262</sup> Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department: Seventeenth Annual Report 1965-1966, p. 3.

<sup>263</sup> See NRS, ED11/731/2: Glasgow: Inspectors Reports, Action Following Investigation; document entitled: 'Corporation of Glasgow—Children's Department. Child Care Arrangements—Report following meetings between Officials of the Social Work Services Group and Representatives of the Staff of the Children's Department (1968). This outlines that though short-term fostering incurred about a quarter of the cost of keeping children in residential homes, this saving was offset by the greater burden for officers in terms of supervision because the situation of foster carers presented many rapid changes. CLOSED FILE.



this structure, with a few minor modifications, was still in place.<sup>264</sup> In the year ended 1965, 70 percent of children brought into care by Glasgow were in foster homes.<sup>265</sup> The results of the inspection were that both prevention and boarding out practices came in for heavy criticism. In their report's summary, the inspectorate stated that preventative work could 'barely touch the fringe' of the demand.<sup>266</sup> And in respect of boarding out the verdict on the department was that it was:

Understaffed at field level...staff are not able to function at a satisfactory level and we feel that too great a burden is being placed on their shoulders...[This] has resulted in case-loads so high as to limit the degree of supervision those in the Boarding-out Section are able to give to the children entrusted to their care and this is disturbing. For those in the Admission and Prevention Section it has led to insufficient time being spent at the enquiry for admission stage and on the prevention side to cases being dealt with at surface level only.<sup>267</sup>

The inspectorate was fulsome in praising the high level of commitment and industry of staff in the department but conceded that with the resources at their disposal, the service fell far short of acceptable standards. While Glasgow's troubles with childcare were probably the worst of all local authorities, it must be remembered that they, by far, had the largest number of children in their care: the city contained '1/5th of the population, but 1/10th of the total number of child care officers in Scotland'.<sup>268</sup> Moreover, the department had fewer staff in 1966 than it had in 1959 despite the addition of new regulations and legislation since that date, all of which had placed greater demands on the service.

It would take a highly publicised tragedy involving the severe mistreatment of a boarded-out child in the care of Glasgow—[REDACTED]—to expose much of what had been going wrong in childcare for almost twenty years. The deaths of two children in foster care (never publicised) shortly after the [REDACTED] tragedy continued to highlight ongoing serious shortcomings in Glasgow's children's department. In what follows we summarise the [REDACTED] case which, because it resulted in a prosecution, can

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<sup>264</sup> A number of children's homes, hostels and Remand facilities run by Glasgow were inspected during 1965, then between January and February 1966, over the course of a few weeks, the work of the department itself was investigated; this included interviews with individual members of staff and visits to homes where children were fostered or under supervision with their own families.

<sup>265</sup> NRS, ED11 /669 /2: Glasgow Child Care, Section 11 'Foster Care'. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., Section 10 (F), 'Prevention'.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., Section 23, 'Summary'.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., Appendix L, 'Glasgow Child Care Service Inspection 1966, Unsatisfactory Features'.

be reported here. The subsequent cases of the deaths of two boys at the home of the same foster parents, never reached the public domain because there were no prosecutions.

#### Case Study VII: ██████████—the failures of boarding out<sup>269</sup>

This case illustrates the problematic state of child welfare in Glasgow during the 1960s and the lack of any substantive mechanism within central government to respond to it. Maltreatment of this child was uncovered ahead of major change in social work services in Scotland (examined in Part II of this report) and knowledge about future developments possibly muddled the waters, since both central and local government knew by 1967 that Children's Departments would likely be abandoned in favour of integrated social work services. This may have led to a lack of willingness to make major and expensive operational changes until the new legislation came into force.

However, some evidence suggests that Glasgow Corporation lacked awareness of the potential seriousness of the situation for children in their care, or of the urgency of the childcare officers' difficulties. For example, the Children's Division at central government level seems to have been unable to compel the Corporation to move more swiftly with improvements in staffing and organisation of services until it was too late for this child.<sup>270</sup>

██████████ was born in ██████████ 1964 and his early years were characterised by parental abandonment and a series of short-term care placements. In 1966, having been abandoned by his mother at the home of another woman, he was placed in Castlemilk Children's Home run by Glasgow local authority. ██████████ was discharged from Castlemilk into the care of his father on ██████████ 1966 but the father left the child with his paternal grandparents who contacted the Children's Department on 18th January 1967 stating that ██████████ father had taken off, his whereabouts were not certain, and they needed financial assistance to keep ██████████. So, he was once again taken into care and boarded-out with his grandparents who continued to care for him until the grandmother became ill.

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<sup>269</sup> Unsurprisingly, when this case went to trial it received widespread coverage in the media of the time; for this reason, only select aspects of what took place have been anonymised.

<sup>270</sup> See NRS, ED11/698: Conviction of Foster Parents of a Boarded-out Boy ██████████ document, prepared by staff at the Scottish Office entitled, 'Glasgow Children's Committee History of Recent Events' dated ██████████ 1967.



Meantime, [REDACTED] younger sibling had been boarded out with a couple living in Glasgow; this seems to have been arranged by an officer of the RSSPCC who knew the foster mother as she worked as a cleaner in the Glasgow RSSPCC offices. The Glasgow boarding-out officer arranged for [REDACTED] also to be placed with his sibling, apparently accepting a verbal reference over the telephone from the RSSPCC officer.<sup>271</sup> [REDACTED] was thereby transferred to this couple—Mr and Mrs Brown—on [REDACTED] 1967.

[REDACTED] was admitted to hospital on [REDACTED] 1967. The admitting doctor believed the child had been subject to severe beatings and was dehydrated and malnourished; his condition at the time was described as serious. It later transpired that his bowels had been perforated because of physical assault. The Browns were subsequently prosecuted. The husband was sentenced to six years for assaulting the child and two years for neglect to run concurrently, and his wife to six months imprisonment for neglecting the child's medical welfare.<sup>272</sup> A large number of inadequacies and errors are attached to this case, but it received no real publicity on a nationwide scale at the time it was uncovered. However, it did attract attention from professional social workers.

Much of the material generated within the Scottish Office regarding this case concerns the ambition to minimise the bad publicity that might ensue and countering the call made for an independent inquiry that followed.<sup>273</sup> Staff at the Scottish Office—both inspectors and administrators—were aware of the challenges experienced by Glasgow's Children's Department. The childcare officer in Glasgow who had charge of [REDACTED] case was dangerously overloaded and undoubtedly under pressure. He acted with expediency by placing [REDACTED] with his sibling in an unvetted foster home, rather than looking more closely at the suitability of these foster parents. It turned out the husband had previous criminal convictions including one for indecency. Following the discovery of this case the Social Work Services Group (SWSG, whose advisory arm took over childcare from the SED inspectorate in 1967) sent out a circular (No. 5/1967) about the need to take greater care over the

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<sup>271</sup> NRS, ED11/698: 'Give me Back My Child', undated news-clipping contained within a collection of extracts from the news media within this NRS, file; and 'Inspector on the Carpet', Glasgow Herald 19/9/1967.

<sup>272</sup> 'Man Jailed for Six Years for Offence Against Foster Son', Glasgow Herald 14 September 1967.

<sup>273</sup> NRS, ED11/698: Conviction of Foster Parents of a Boarded-out Boy [REDACTED] correspondence. For example note from P. A. Cox, dated 3/10/1967; Replies regarding call for inquiry, including correspondence with Bruce Millan MP.

selection of foster parents and this was accompanied by a leaflet about identifying 'battered baby' syndrome written by the British Paediatric Association.<sup>274</sup> This action demonstrates the limited extent to which the Scottish Office could intervene constructively where bad practice was concerned. The same was true some months later following the deaths of two boys in foster care.

Following the SED's 1965-1966 inspection of Glasgow childcare services, recommendations were outlined to the Children's Committee by the SED inspectorate. These included a substantial increase in staff, the setting up of teams of workers each headed by a senior staff member, and the de-centralisation of these teams across several local offices within Glasgow.<sup>275</sup> Yet response to this advice was slow and by January 1968, when the SWSG met with members of Glasgow Children's Committee and staff of the Children's Department (likely with the █████ case fresh in their minds) it was found that while some improvements in staffing had been put in place, these were interim and the full recommendations had not yet been met. Moreover, many of the new staff employed were inexperienced trainees. Such halting improvements were too late for █████—and even following this case, 'teething problems' were ongoing.<sup>276</sup>

The conviction of the foster parents in September 1967 spurred calls for an independent inquiry into the organisation of Glasgow's Children's Department by various organisations representing social work professionals, suggesting a lack of trust in Scottish Office monitoring. These calls came principally from the Association of Child Care Officers, the Association of Social Workers, the Institute of Medical Social Workers, and even Glasgow University Settlement waded in to demand an inquiry.<sup>277</sup> Associated documentation reveal the lengths the SWSG and the Secretary of State went to in order to successfully resist this request.<sup>278</sup> Bruce Millan, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, was delegated the task of overseeing the

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<sup>274</sup> NRS, ED11/698: 'Child Care Circular Letter No. 5/1967: Fostering of Children', dated 5.10.1967.

<sup>275</sup> NRS, ED11-669-2: Child Care Arrangements, Glasgow Children's Department, Inspectors; section 25 of report.

<sup>276</sup> NRS, ED11/731/2: Glasgow: Inspectors Reports, Action Following Investigation; Minute from (Inspector) K. Hull addressed to Miss Morrison and to 'Child Care Branch', copy to Chief Inspector, headed 'Glasgow Children's Department' dated 25/1/1968. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>277</sup> For relevant correspondence see, NRS, ED11/697: copy of a letter from Glasgow University Settlement, signed by Allan Walker, dated 22/9/1967; letter addressed to William Ross, Secretary of State for Scotland dated 22/9/1967; and ED11/698: letter to Ross from the Association of Social Workers dated 6/10/1969 and letter from the Institute of Medical Social Workers dated 19/10/1967.

<sup>278</sup> See ED11/697 and ED11/698 for examples of correspondence and reports on the issue of calls for an independent inquiry.



question of Glasgow's childcare and forestalling any possibility of an inquiry following the █████ case. Together with staff from SWSG he met with members of Glasgow's Children's Committee in November 1967.<sup>279</sup> Millan was charged with the responsibility of getting it across to the Glasgow Committee that he had not come only to discuss recent childcare scandals.<sup>280</sup> He also needed to impress upon them that, 'the requests for an inquiry into the running of the Children's Department betray a complete loss of confidence in the Department by many social workers in Scotland.' It was further remarked that it was doubted that 'the Committee have yet appreciated this point.'<sup>281</sup> Minutes of this meeting record that requests for sufficient resources to employ the recommended increase in staff within Glasgow had been blocked by the Corporation's Establishments Committee (following a report from an organisation & methods officer).<sup>282</sup> Remarks attributed to Millan make clear moreover, that this was part of wider problem in Scotland:

At the time of the inspection of the Children's Department in 1966, the Department had a total staff of 21, compared with a total of 35 in Edinburgh which had not quite half the population of Glasgow. While comparisons with Edinburgh and elsewhere might be unwelcome, the fact was that Glasgow's position was even more unfavourable compared with a number of English local authorities; and in general the Minister was far from happy with the staffing position throughout Scotland.<sup>283</sup>

A few months later, Mr Millan also met with representatives of the Association of Child Care Officers (ACCO) in London; it transpired that ACCO had themselves met with members of Glasgow's Children's Committee by this point, and they reported to Mr Millan that they had been far from impressed with this experience stating that: 'concepts of modern childcare practice seemed to come as a complete surprise to

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<sup>279</sup> NRS, ED11/698: Conviction of Foster Parents of a Boarded-out Boy █████ 'Note of a Meeting between Mr Bruce Millan M.P. Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, and Representatives of Glasgow Children's Committee in Glasgow City Chambers at 11 a.m. on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1967.

<sup>280</sup> Following the assault on █████ there was another scandal involving children in Gryffe Children's Home, where it was alleged boys had been mistreated; this case is discussed briefly in section 4.2 of this report.

<sup>281</sup> NRS, ED11/698: quotation from a copy of the agenda prepared for Millan's meeting in Glasgow 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1967 contained in this file.

<sup>282</sup> NRS, ED11/698: 'Note of a Meeting', p. 2; see also in the same file a document, prepared by staff at the Scottish Office entitled, 'Glasgow Children's Committee History of Recent Events' dated 28/9/1967.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 'Note of a Meeting between Mr Bruce Millan M.P. Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, and Representatives of Glasgow Children's Committee', p. 1.

the Convenor of the Children's Committee in the course of the discussion'.<sup>284</sup>  
Minutes of this meeting further record that:

...the Association's representatives indicated that, if it had not been for the Social Work (Scotland) Bill, they would have been pressing for an enquiry into the whole of the child care services in Scotland, since Glasgow were not the only authority who caused concern. They accepted, however, that the legislation was the answer: a great deal would depend on the new directors of social work. Mr Millan said that provisions had been written into the Bill about appointments to these posts, despite the reluctance of the local authority associations who felt that they should be trusted to make appointments in this sphere.<sup>285</sup>

Issues surrounding inadequate training for staff were also covered, with an ACCO representative stating that given the reputation obtained by local government children's services, 'suitably trained staff tended to join child psychiatric clinics rather than overburdened children's departments in Scotland.' It was pointed out that a full-time training course for childcare officers did not presently exist in the west of Scotland, so there was no provision for existing staff in Glasgow or other burghs to be seconded to such a programme, and the department in Glasgow lacked the facilities to adequately supervise trainees, even if a course was introduced.<sup>286</sup> Indeed this had been shown to be the case a few years earlier (see Section 4.8.1 of this Report).

The single positive observation that might be made of the aftermath of the [REDACTED] case is that police checks on foster carers resident in Glasgow were instituted; henceforth, all such potential guardians would be subject to criminal record checks (although this did not prevent the placement of children with a foster carer with a criminal record just a year later—something only revealed by the deaths of those

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<sup>284</sup> NRS, ED11/731/2: Glasgow: Inspectors Reports, Action Following Investigation, 'Note of a Meeting with representatives of the Association of Child Care Officers on April 9th, 1968 at 4.30 pm in the House of Commons', p. 1. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>285</sup> NRS, ED11/731/2: Glasgow: Inspectors Reports, Action Following Investigation, 'Note of a Meeting with representatives of the Association of Child Care Officers on April 9th, 1968 at 4.30 pm in the House of Commons'. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.



children).<sup>287</sup> ACCO also lobbied for checks to be rolled out across Scotland.<sup>288</sup> The tragic events witnessed in this case of a boarded-out child served to galvanise childcare professional organisations and as a result, the whole profile of recruitment, training, and remuneration of workers in this field obtained a higher profile. Significantly, however, it had taken a whole twenty years following the enactment of the Children Act to achieve this.

It is difficult now to understand quite why, even when presented with such damning information, and the near death of a child, Glasgow's Establishments Committee continued to block recommendations for more resources. However, the [REDACTED] case and what followed demonstrates in some ways the long-term fallout from the unpopularity of the Children's Act. Children's Departments had low status within Scottish local government. In 1965, the salary of Glasgow's Children's Officer was £2,750 per annum, while the director of the city's parks earned £3,363. By 1966, Mr McLeish's yearly earnings had risen to £2,949; but of the 35 posts in the corporation designated as 'chief officials', the children's officer post came 29th in terms of level of salary. Only the 'General Manager of the Halls Department' and the 'Road Safety Officer' were on a lesser scale, and in the case of the latter, he received a free house.<sup>289</sup> Poor remuneration was a problem throughout Scotland. In Glasgow, where there was an unarguable need for resources to be fed into childcare, the children's department was continuously, chronically under-resourced. This easily resulted in poorly-judged decisions being made for children by overburdened officers—[REDACTED] and the two boys who died (case study below) were the unfortunate victims of this legacy.

#### Case Study VIII: Death of children in foster care, 1968-1969<sup>290</sup>

Less than two years after the [REDACTED] affair the deaths of two children just months apart in the care of the same foster parents shone the spotlight yet again on failings in the city of Glasgow in respect of the protection of vulnerable children. This time,

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<sup>287</sup> 'Police Chief Will Disclose Record in Foster Cases', The Scotsman 19/9/1967; NRS, ED11/731/2: Glasgow: Inspectors Reports, Action Following Investigation; 'Note of a Meeting on 26th January 1968 at Glasgow, with the Sub-committee of the Children's Committee of Glasgow Corporation, set up to investigate matters arising out of the inspection of the Child Care Inspectorate in 1965-66'. The question of checks on existing carers outside of Glasgow was more complicated and not resolved at this time, though it is clear in the latter document that this was under discussion. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>288</sup> 'Police Checks to be Sought on Baby cases', Edinburgh Evening News 14 September 1967.

<sup>289</sup> GCA D-TC17/1/19: The Corporation of Glasgow: Return of Staff as at 1st September 1965; and D-TC17/1/20: The Corporation of Glasgow: Return of Staff as at 1st September, 1966.

<sup>290</sup> NRS, ED11/786: Deaths of Children in local authority care.



however, the Scottish Office did not hold back in its criticism, albeit the case never reached the public domain.

In May 1968 a young child of almost four years old died in hospital from a brain haemorrhage. He had ostensibly been accidentally hit on the head with an iron being held by his foster mother. Whilst it was reported he experienced no ill effects on the day it occurred, he collapsed the following day and was admitted to hospital where he died. Although there was initially no suggestion that this had not been an accident, Scottish Office officials were suspicious of the story and investigated the placement of this child. The child had been in care at Quarrier's and had been befriended by the foster parents under Quarrier's foster aunt scheme. This was an illegitimate mixed-race child from Glasgow and the foster mother seems to have taken a particular interest in him. It was whilst he was staying with the family on an extended holiday that Glasgow Children's Department arranged for him to be boarded with them permanently whilst the assessment of the foster parents' suitability was still underway.

Less than a year later, in March 1969, another young boy died in the care of the same foster parents, again of a skull fracture causing bleeding on the brain following a collapse at home. It emerged that this child and his brother, both mixed race, had been placed in the care of the same foster family by Glasgow children's services just eight weeks after the death of the first child. The second child had allegedly fallen from a swing and hit his head causing an epileptic turn but he had been discharged from hospital after 10 days. The Glasgow boarding-out officer had decided not to remove the child from the foster parents at this time, nor had she acted when informed by the local authority in which the children were placed that there had been reports of the children being 'struck on the head and the face'.<sup>291</sup> Some months later the child allegedly collapsed at home and died.

Whilst the Scottish Office were expressing their deep concerns about Glasgow Children Department's ability to safeguard the children in its care and accusing them of failing to put the safety of children before the desire to keep the foster parents, Glasgow's childcare officers had found these foster parents suitable to foster again. In July 1968 an internal Scottish Office Memo from a Scottish Office official who conducted an initial report into the death of the first child remarked that '[d]espite adverse features Miss X [the Glasgow childcare officer responsible] is convinced the

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<sup>291</sup> NRS, ED 11/786: Deaths of Children in local authority care—Initial Report on death of [2<sup>nd</sup> child] by D.P.Hughes, senior adviser, 27 March 1969. CLOSED FILE.

[foster parents] would be suitable foster parents for another child. I don't think we can doubt her judgement.'<sup>292</sup> The report recommended no further action be taken in the case of the first death though it was also recommended that changes in record keeping be implemented to 'help continuity of care' and that there should also be '[d]iscussion with Voluntary Homes and Children's Officers about the approval of couples who become visitors to a child, and the need in some cases to anticipate their application to be foster parents.'<sup>293</sup>

However, officials within the Education Department were less confident. An internal memo on 23 July 1968 urged a colleague to 'approach the [Glasgow] Children's Officer ...to discuss with him whether it would not be wiser to give up the idea of using the [foster parents] again... She might stress that we have never heard of an accident of this kind happening before.'<sup>294</sup> It subsequently transpired that the Glasgow Children's Officer was 'unaware ...that 2 more coloured children had been placed with them by Miss X [the CCO].'<sup>295</sup> On being questioned about this action the Children's Officer had commented that 'he was quite satisfied with Miss Xs actions in the case' though '[h]e conceded that in this case it would have been appropriate that his officers consult him before placing further children with the [family].'<sup>296</sup>

In hindsight the decision to place children with the couple so soon after the death of a child seems extraordinary. The Scottish Office was extremely critical of Glasgow's children's services, intimating that there was pressure to accept foster homes even if they were not regarded as 'in every way satisfactory', expressing incredulity at the acceptance of a foster parent with a criminal conviction (it emerged that the foster father had a criminal record for theft) and at the placing of more children with this family before the Procurator Fiscal's report had been received on the causes of death of the first child. The Head of the Scottish Office inspectorate, Mr Gillespie, did not mince his words:

It might be possible to see an element of courage in the action Miss X [Glasgow child care officer] has taken. Unfortunately the line between. courage and rashness is often thin. It is only too possible that, having formed her opinion on

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<sup>292</sup> NRS, ED11/786: Deaths of Children in local authority care: memo from Hunter to Miss Strongman and Miss Morrison, 3 July 1968. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>293</sup> NRS, ED11/786: Deaths of Children in local authority care. Report on death of XX authored by Hunter, 3 July 1968. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid, internal memo, 23 July 1968. (p. 21).

<sup>295</sup> Ibid, internal memo, Gillespie to Miss Strongman, 5 Aug 1968.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

the death of [the first child], Miss X may have become involved in a need to vindicate [the foster mother]. Certainly to place other children there so soon appears headlong haste...The view taken by a Chief Officer of the unusual, the irregular, or the doubtful, may be influenced, and properly so, by considerations beyond those immediately apparent to the officer most closely involved. These include the application of any clear lines of policy, his own or his Committee's, as to acceptable standards, the avoidance, as far as possible, of doubt in providing for the care of children, the need to consider the possible exposure to criticism of his Committee and the service for which they are responsible.<sup>297</sup>

Little had changed since the [REDACTED] tragedy and the internal investigation undertaken by the Scottish Office—that included a critical report by a Social Work Advisor—revealed a series of shortcomings in the operation of foster care in Glasgow. These included the failure to properly vet prospective foster parents (the foster father's criminal record for theft had been discounted by Glasgow childcare officers); the failure of Glasgow Children's Department to arrange medical examinations of the boys within a month of their being placed with the foster parents; a failure to follow-up intimations of mistreatment of the second child placed with the foster parents and his brother (which were detailed in the child's case file and that had also been passed to Glasgow by the receiving local authority in September 1968); and the grievous error in placing two more children with this couple so soon after the death of the first child in very odd circumstances.

The initial upshot of these children's deaths was twofold: the Glasgow Children's Officer was moved from oversight of foster care and a new team put in place (it was clear that his childcare officers were operating independently of him) and more in-service training was to be introduced for Glasgow's childcare officers. The official internal report accepted that both boys had died as a result of accidents (although doubts were persistently mooted by various SED officials). Glasgow's Children's Department was castigated for its deficiencies which included not paying sufficient attention to the particular emotional needs of the second child to die (it was later intimated that the foster parents were struggling and had requested help that had been interpreted as a request for financial assistance) and not reading or responding to the medical reports on the second child's accident with the swing—bruises had

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

been noted on his face and body and the hospital had suggested 'that the home circumstances are briefly checked on.'<sup>298</sup> The report concluded:

What we have to ensure is that Glasgow takes a fresh look at its foster care programme and that its senior social workers in particular are alive to the potential dangers in placing any child with foster parents.<sup>299</sup>

There continued to be internal discussions at the SED concerning this case, especially regarding the vetting of the foster parents, the visits of unrelated people to children's homes to befriend children, whether Glasgow had breached any Regulations particularly in respect of the requirement to inform the receiving authority not less than 21 days prior of their intention to board out the boys with the foster parents (which was not adhered to), and the recalcitrance of Glasgow in providing the SED with relevant material. However, there were no prosecutions as there was no agreement amongst the doctors involved in both deaths as to whether the injuries were caused by accidents or were deliberately inflicted.<sup>300</sup>

The conclusion that must be drawn in retrospect from the deaths of these two boys is that the management of foster care in Glasgow constituted a real weakness. The pressure on Glasgow children's services was such that corners were cut, and it is nearly impossible not to conclude that they continued to put the interests of foster parents above children's safety. In this particular case the fact that the children involved were mixed race also likely has some bearing on how their cases were handled. We might infer that the difficulty in finding foster placements for mixed race children meant that when a family was found there was the potential for decisions to be made too quickly.

## Summary of boarding out

By far the majority of children who came into the care system in this period were eventually boarded out in a continuation of the practice that had prevailed before the Children Act. Changes to the boarding-out regime were slow in being implemented. In the case of Glasgow there was really no change for children who were already in the system. The majority were in foster homes far from the city; they had little or no contact with their natural families and oversight of their wellbeing and welfare was conducted in a manner that was unlikely to identify mistreatment or

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<sup>298</sup> Ibid., Internal memo from Beti Jones to Mr Cowley, 26 Feb 1970.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., Report on death of XX by Mr D.P.Hughes, 1 Dec 1969.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., Report by the Procurator Fiscal at Falkirk as to the death of XX, 28 March 1969.

abuse. Such were the numbers and geographical distribution of boarded-out children and so stretched were the staff of many Children's Departments that while inspection was carried out in accordance with the regulations it was often superficial. Inspectors were aware of the shortage of guardians and the consequences for a child if he or she were removed from a foster home. This situation was the cause of some risky decision making by childcare officers.

Whilst over time there were efforts by Glasgow to find homes for children in the city and its environs this was made extremely challenging by the poor quality of housing in Glasgow. So it was still the case that throughout the 1950s and 1960s children were boarded out in remote locations,<sup>301</sup> not only cutting them off from relatives, but severing them from the services from which they might have benefited if they experienced emotional disturbance or when they came to be discharged from care.

The regulation and inspection regime as it was implemented by the local authority adhered to the frequency requirement—most children it seems were visited every six months and then every three months when the frequency was increased in 1959—but from the case files consulted it is evident that children were not always seen and that the opinions of guardians and other adults were largely taken at face value. When guardians requested a child's removal the child was either moved to another foster home in the locality or back to a residential home in Glasgow.

Although we have not identified in the written record that children's views were routinely elicited, this does not mean that this did not happen. It may merely indicate that childcare officers did not record these conversations in case files.

The official written record, including published records such as annual reports, requires careful interpretation. Where case files are concerned, these are largely silent on the issue of abuse in this timeframe. This is not to say that childcare officers did not discover mistreatment and abuse of children in foster homes. (The archive of children's case files is voluminous, and we have only been able to select a few for in depth analysis.) Children were regularly removed from guardians and this may have happened because childcare officers suspected ill-treatment. More often, however,

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<sup>301</sup> Glasgow Corporation Children's Committee Annual Reports provide statistics on numbers of children boarded out and locations. For example, the Twelfth Annual Report for 1960-61 indicates that 133 children were still boarded in the county of Inverness and 122 in the county of Aberdeen in May 1961, p. 12.



this happened because the child was unsettled or exhibiting disturbed behaviour, and the guardian requested removal.

In Glasgow, by the 1960s, many more children were found foster homes in the city and its environs and increasingly these were with relatives rather than strangers, with a view to returning the children to their parents when circumstances improved. But oversight of these children was severely stretched and it is clear that in this period, prior to reorganisation brought about by the 1968 Social Work Act, recommendations regarding matching children with foster carers and ensuring childcare officers developed strong relationships with all the parties simply could not be achieved owing to resource limitations. Indeed, it is likely that the reorganisation exacerbated an already stretched and failing service. The cases of [REDACTED] and the two boys who died in foster care highlighted the potential dangers of a foster care system that was not adequately resourced or staffed.

## **Children's Homes 1948-1968**

The condition of children's homes—knowledge and responses

Whilst local authorities maintained their preference for boarding out of a child who came into their care following the implementation of the Children Act, residential care provided by local authorities and especially by voluntary institutions remained an essential element of the care system, not least because of the new requirement for local authorities to establish separate reception homes for the initial assessment of children before they were found a more permanent and suitable placement. However, residential care was also a backstop, an essential form of provision prior to children being boarded out, for children with particular needs, for large sibling groups, for those for whom foster care had broken down, and for many Roman Catholic children. In 1952 Glasgow was responsible for 3,340 children in care; 1,868 were boarded out but 647 were in residential homes (397 in local authority residential homes; 250 in voluntary homes, the vast majority of these Catholic).<sup>302</sup> Moreover, the voluntary homes also cared for children who had been placed there privately—that is, not by the local authority.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department Third Annual Report, 1951-52, p. 4.

<sup>303</sup> Quarrier's Homes is a good example where a number of children were placed there by private individuals often via intermediaries such as the RSSPCC, particularly before the 1960s. For example see Quarrier's Children's records.

Clyde had deprecated large children's homes for their institutional character and had recommended training of childcare staff. The Children Act required local authorities to institute reception homes as one means of ensuring children were placed in a home that best met their needs, but the residential childcare sector saw only very limited change or improvement in the post-war decades.

The poor condition of residential care for homeless children in Scotland was revealed in a 1950 report produced by the Homes Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care, set up in the wake of the Children Act. The report surveyed existing provision, made observations on standards of care, and made suggestions for improvement. The report offers a bleak picture of the state of residential care in Scotland after the war. The sector was dominated by homes run by voluntary organisations (142 homes compared with 37 run by local authorities) and all of these institutions had been established prior to the 1948 Act, but were now being run under the terms of the Children's Act.<sup>304</sup> This number included 17 Approved Schools, 58 residential homes, and 23 After Care homes. The latter were essentially hostels for working age children. The Committee focused its efforts on residential homes and made the following opening remarks following visits by the Committee members to a good number of these institutions around the country:

We found that there was marked variation, in both local authority homes and voluntary homes, in the standards of buildings, equipment, and of child care generally. While we saw nothing to cause us grave concern, conditions were in some cases worse than we expected and often could have been improved at no great cost. Lack of money was not the only cause of low standards where they existed, and we formed the opinion that the right perception of child care on the part of the local authority or voluntary organisation responsible for the home, given effect to in the home by a trained staff with a love of children and an aptitude for child care work, would do more than anything else to make the home satisfactory. Where this was present, we were gratified to notice how often means had somehow been found to make the necessary improvements in premises and equipment.<sup>305</sup>

The Committee's report identified a wide range of concerns in relation to the environment and culture of the homes, the quality of staff and the need to pay due attention to children's particular needs. In summary these concerns were:

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<sup>304</sup> NRS, GD 534/12/5/2: Report of the Homes Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950), p. 3.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., p. 5.



a) Size: overcrowding was a key concern of the Committee. They endorsed the view of the Clyde Committee that homes should be small (around 10-12 children of both sexes) though recognised that change would take time in part owing to the shortage of suitably qualified staff. In the meantime they recommended that local authorities and voluntary organisations should not establish homes for more than 25-30 children. This is at a time when some of the larger homes like Quarriers and Smyllum housed numbers significantly in excess of this recommendation.

b) Accommodation: the Committee deprecated the 'over development of community life' in some institutions, commenting on the lack of privacy for children and the 'cheerless institutional atmosphere' to be found in some. Some institutions were drab, had scrubbed wooden floors, long uncovered tables and benches, chipped utensils. This could be ameliorated by the use of brightly coloured paint and simple improvements to fixtures and fittings.<sup>306</sup>

c) Staffing: There was a clear sense that staff should have some training. The Committee endorsed the Clyde Report's recommendation:

the person in charge of a home should have some training in the care of healthy children, and that, contrary to the belief firmly established in some quarters, a hospital nursing qualification alone should not be regarded as automatically fitting the holder to be responsible for the running of a home.<sup>307</sup>

This was a response to the pervasive employment of former nurses and matrons in residential homes. In some homes it was observed that staff wore nursing uniforms but that this created an institutional atmosphere and should be avoided. Again this followed the Clyde Committee that had commented that there was too much readiness to accept that someone with a nursing qualification will 'make a good matron.'<sup>308</sup>

The report further commented on staff shortages as common either because they were unable to recruit, or because of 'the failure of managers of some homes to realise the ration of staff required for the proper care of children'.<sup>309</sup> Too few staff,

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>308</sup> Clyde Report, p. 26.

<sup>309</sup> NRS, GD 534/12/5/2: Report of the Homes Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care, p. 9.

they argued, resulted in not only poor care and overworked staff, but also to children being overworked. Later on they deplored children being excessively engaged in domestic tasks and stated that they should only be required to make their beds in the morning, and that no more than one hour should be spent on domestic tasks in the evenings weekdays and on Saturday mornings; and that they should never be engaged in 'monotonous and tiring domestic work'.<sup>310</sup>

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the report was the attention paid to the necessity of reception homes for the purpose of ensuring that, on coming into care, children were properly assessed so that their needs were identified and treated, which in turn would aid a successful foster placement.<sup>311</sup> The Committee was well aware that there were many instances of children being moved from one placement to another, often returning to a children's home in between, and this was disruptive. They may also have been aware that it was not uncommon for little or no assessment to have taken place and children driven to remote areas were simply dropped off with guardians who liked the look of them or who had expressed a preference for a boy or girl. It is worth quoting the Committee's views on reception homes and their functions at length because they reflect a view—at least by members of the committee and more widely amongst professionals in the field—that children should be treated as individuals and that children coming into care would likely be suffering from development problems and 'emotional disturbance'. They recognised that the first few weeks when a child came into care were crucial for the future adjustment and wellbeing of the child. As we have already seen in the previous discussion of boarding out, emotional problems were commonplace amongst children who came into the care system:

In the course of our visits to Children's Homes in Scotland...there have been repeatedly brought to our notice the difficulties created by the placing of children in residential institutions without proper regard being paid to the individual character, difficulties and needs. The larger number of children in the care of local authorities who are resident for long periods in children's homes are usually unsuitable for boarding out. Some of them may have already been tried in foster homes and because these homes were unsuitable for their particular needs, or because the children were at the time not ready for boarding out, the arrangements were not successful and the children suffered further disturbance and further set-back.

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20.

It is the upbringing of children presenting such problems that the staffs of children's homes are largely called upon to undertake. Precisely what the children's difficulties are, how they have arisen, and how they should be remedied, if remedy is possible, are matters with which the staffs of homes are seldom competent to deal adequately, even if, as infrequently happens, they possess all the relevant information...

To derive all the benefit possible from the boarding-out system, the placing of a child should be undertaken only after very serious consideration has been given to the child's personal problems and to his own particular needs. A very large number of children who come into the care of local authorities have suffered some retardation of development caused by a disturbance of their home life. Their parents may have died suddenly; they may have come from broken homes; or they may have been neglected or maltreated. The emotional disturbance will be greater in some cases than in others according to the antecedent circumstances and to the sensitiveness of the child. The arbitrary placing of children in foster homes will certainly result in a large number of "misfits" with consequent unhappiness for the child and frustration for the foster parents. We learned for example that a boy of twelve years had been in six foster homes in four and a half years; and a delicate girl of nine who in the course of a little over two years was in three foster homes and four institutions, for the most part being separated from her two younger brothers to whom she was emotionally deeply attached...

The Children Act, 1948, places on the councils of counties and large burghs the duty of providing for children...Section 15 of the Act, which deals with the provision of accommodation by local authorities in children's homes, requires that such accommodation shall include separate accommodation for the temporary reception of children with, in particular, the necessary facilities for the observation of their physical and mental condition.

We are strongly of the opinion that the provision of reception accommodation should be regarded as a task of highest priority...The immediate problem of the child deprived of parental upbringing is, as we see it, essentially the successful introduction of the child, with the minimal emotional disturbance, into a new life, whether institutional life or the more normal life of the foster home. Too often the deprived child fails to acquire any sense of "belonging" and the effects of this over-developed sense of solitariness reach far into adult life. It would be going too far to say that by requiring each child taken into care to pass through

a reception home all the problems of the deprived child would disappear, but we are sure that many of these problems would be eased, if not solved...<sup>312</sup>

Furthermore and more practically, the committee was of the view that '[r]eception homes should be small, focused on properly assessing each child's need' and significantly, they recommended that they should be located 'conveniently close to a child guidance unit.'<sup>313</sup> Moreover, the staffing of such homes was crucial, with the permanent care staff supplemented by specialist consultant staff for the proper assessment of each child. The regime envisaged was one in which the child was under constant surveillance by care staff, teachers, and so forth and 'daily records of each child's activities and progress [would] be compiled by the warden, matron and teacher'.<sup>314</sup> They recommended daily staff conferences and (on the advice of the English homes) stays of only up to four weeks unless there is a reason for a child to stay a couple of weeks longer in order to complete treatment for 'a minor maladjustment of physical defect'.<sup>315</sup> According to advice from the committee, this should all conclude with a weekly conference between home staff, the responsible children's officer and the (child guidance) consultant to discuss the child's progress. At the end there should be an 'agreed assessment of the needs and potentialities of the child' and they should

recommend how the child should be placed—whether in a children's home and if so what type; or, if fit for immediate boarding out, the kind of foster home in which he is most likely to thrive. There may be some cases in which observation for four weeks proves insufficient to enable an assessment to be made, and the conference will then require to recommend a further period in the reception home.<sup>316</sup>

The Advisory Committee's report reflected the spirit of Clyde and the Children Act in its focus on meeting the needs of the individual child in order to ensure the best chance of a successful placement. And, it should be said, it presented an idealised view of how residential care could and should meet the needs of the child. The report was submitted to the Scottish Education Department in 1950. However, whilst the Department noted that its recommendations for the improvement of residential care in Scotland were generally desirable, it remarked that 'the standard which they

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

contemplate cannot be reached for some years at least.<sup>317</sup> There were a number of obstacles to achieving the changes required, both financial and regulatory:

a number of the recommendations could be brought into effect only if building work was undertaken in many homes, and even if local authorities and voluntary organisations were prepared to do this, the present capital investment allocation would be insufficient. Difficulties in obtaining suitable staff are an obstacle to the adoption of other of the Committee's recommendations. The Secretary of State has power under sections 15 and 31 of the Children Act to make regulations governing the conduct of local authorities and voluntary homes. In view of the great variations in the types of homes and the difficulties mentioned in bringing these homes up to the high standards, it is proposed to make these regulations in fairly general terms. It is understood that this course is to be adopted by the Home Office with whom we are keeping in close touch. The more detailed views of the Committee could be incorporated in a memorandum to be communicated to local authorities and voluntary organisations when regulations are made...the report [also] contains the Committee's proposals for the establishment in Scotland of reception homes for the temporary reception of children with facilities for observing their physical and mental condition. The Home Office have already issued a memorandum on this subject to local authorities and voluntary organisations in England, where, to judge from the comments in the magazine "Child Care", it has attracted a good deal of criticism. We might issue a Scottish memorandum along with the regulations...unless meantime we receive enquiries or proposals about reception homes from local authorities.<sup>318</sup>

Clearly then, there was an understanding and acknowledgement at the level of the Secretary of State of the poor condition of the residential care sector and the need to institute change. And yet there is no evidence of fundamental reform or even a serious attempt to implement the recommendations, with the exception of that which was explicitly required in the Children Act—the establishment of Reception Homes. These were quite quickly put in place in Glasgow and on strong advice from the Advisory Committees for Boarding Out and Homes.

In the early years following the Act there was little if any change in how any of these homes were run. Glasgow's reception homes were still dominated by the medical model (a model criticised by Clyde and the Advisory Committee as noted above). In practice, this meant that children's lives in the very early stages of being brought into

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<sup>317</sup> NRS, ED 11/426: Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care: Submission of Reports of Committees on Boarding-Out, After-Care & Homes (internal correspondence, 28 Feb. 1950).

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

the care system were dominated by disruption as they were moved between homes and hospital settings, sometimes for protracted periods of time.<sup>319</sup> For example, the monthly report from one of Glasgow Corporation's Homes, Eversley, in September 1944 (note this is prior to the Act) records 33 admissions, 23 discharges, eight transfers to institutions and 11 transfers from institutions. In addition, three children were transferred to hospital. This indicates a significant degree of movement of children in and out of the home within the space of just one month.<sup>320</sup> Where reception homes were adopted in smaller burghs (in Kirkcaldy for example), there is equally little evidence that they managed to be innovative in their management of children. The children still slept in dormitories, the home was managed by medical professionals (often trained nurses and nursery nurses) and the children seem to have experienced the same range of problems. Reception homes were supposed to have access to specialist child guidance facilities but there is no evidence that this was an option pursued on any scale.

The Secretary of State's citing of financial obstacles to the implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee might be judged as a little disingenuous. There was provision in the 1948 Act for the Scottish Office to grant sums of money to Voluntary Homes in order for them to make improvements to meet the conditions laid down by the Act. The Home Department was wary of supporting religious bodies in this way, but there was an attempt to be generous to homes that had limited assets, provided they used these to part-fund the improvements with the government making-up the remainder of the costs involved (in some cases this had been a substantial part of the total costs). So the Home Department did make contributions towards improvements such as sanitary facilities, new boilers, and in one case in 1951, installing electricity. For example, the Convent of the Good Shepherd in Edinburgh received a grant of £800 to improve sanitary facilities in 1950 and a year later around the same sum again to sub-divide the large dormitories. In 1952 it once again was awarded a grant to make building improvements to provide central heating, improved sanitary facilities, installation of an electric fire alarm, sand pit in the playground and the construction of a 'Jungle

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<sup>319</sup> For evidence see document GCA, DTC8/16B/27: Committee Papers -Welfare Institutions (only a few surviving records), and the notes on a selection of case files for children born in 1945 (GCA, D-Hew Case Files).

<sup>320</sup> GCA, DTC8/16B/27: Welfare Sub-committee on Institutions: Handwritten report from Matron, Eversely home, 4/9/44.

Gym' at a cost of £3,841.<sup>321</sup> However, The Scottish Office was unwilling to fund major outlay on structural alterations or capital investment. This is illustrated by the refusal to help Aberlour Orphanage establish 'small, family group-type homes'.<sup>322</sup> This was clearly something that had been recommended but which would require considerable expenditure. Aberlour considered this should come under 'improvements', but the SHD saw things differently. The SHD implied that if Aberlour were to borrow money in order to fund this, the costs of borrowing could be recouped from increasing their charges to local authorities for children placed there. A letter dated 24 June 1963 to Aberlour makes clear that grants towards making improvements and appropriately equipping existing homes were allowed under the conditions of the Act, but funding new build establishments was not.<sup>323</sup>

Local authorities likewise did approve grants for the purpose of improvements and to enhance children's environment in residential homes though Glasgow was also seriously challenged by a shortage of accommodation so greater emphasis was on the provision of additional accommodation. In November 1948 the Glasgow Children's Committee reported on plans to purchase a property in Kilmacolm for use as a home and 'for the lease of huts [likely Nissen huts—author's comment] situated in the Garrison grounds at Millport for the purpose of providing accommodation for children.'<sup>324</sup> And in December the same year Nissen huts were to be placed at a Castlemilk home to accommodate a dining room, a playroom and lavatories. In March 1949 the Committee approved the purchase of Gryffe Castle in Bridge of Weir for use as a children's home.<sup>325</sup> Glasgow was having to expand its residential care provision at this time, despite the fact that institutional care was seen as the least best option for children given the quality of the homes and the inability of the vast majority to offer anything resembling family life. This expansion generally took the form of the purchase of draughty and unmodernised buildings or the provision of

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<sup>321</sup> NRS, ED11/380: Homeless Children Act 1948 – Conditions of Grants to Homes. Homeless Children: Financial Provisions for training and Grants to Voluntary Homes Consultation with Local Authority, applications (Convent of the Good Shepherd).

<sup>322</sup> NRS, ED11/380: Homeless Children Act 1948—Conditions of Grants to Homes. Correspondence, 24 June 1963.

<sup>323</sup> NRS, ED11/380: Homeless Children Act 1948—Conditions of Grants to Homes. Correspondence, 24 June 1963.

<sup>324</sup> GCA C1/3/118: Children's Committee Minutes, 2 Nov 1948.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., 8 March 1949.



extra space via prefabricated corrugated iron huts. Subsequent inspections reveal the poor conditions in many of these institutions.<sup>326</sup>

Thus, there was ample evidence presented to the Scottish Office in the years immediately following the Children Act that residential childcare in Scotland required major investment in estate and people to meet both the increasing numbers of children requiring care and the improvements in the quality of that care. Too many children, perhaps the majority, were being looked after in substandard, overcrowded children's homes by untrained staff. The regulation and inspection regimes designed to ensure standards of care in residential homes did little to improve matters in the following years.

#### [Inspection of residential care: an overview](#)

The inspection of residential care homes and the children cared for in these institutions (inspection of each was a separate process and responsibility) was shared between the Scottish Office and the local authorities. Prior to the Children Act inspection had been shared between different Scottish Office Departments (Education, Home, Health). The Act provided the opportunity to harmonise the inspection regime at this level within the Scottish Home Department (SHD), but there remained a confusing bricolage of inspections undertaken by the SHD and local authorities which lacked coherence. The following responsibility for inspection pertained, following the regulations governing children's homes instituted in 1948. But the Children (Boarding-out etc) (Scotland) Rules and Regulations, 1947 covered the inspection of children in homes as well as those in foster care. These were superseded by the *Administration of Children's Homes (Scotland) Regulations 1959*.

- All residential childcare institutions (with the exception of Approved Schools)—both local authority and voluntary run—were inspected by the Scottish Home Department. Visits were undertaken by SHD childcare inspectors.
- Local authority children's homes were also inspected by local authority Children's Committees. The visits were undertaken by councillor members of the Children's Committee on a rota basis as well as by the Children's Officer.

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<sup>326</sup> For example, see NRS. ED11/525-2: Glasgow Eversley Children's Home Inspection Report 1967 described as 'bare and institutional'.

- Children in residential care—both in local authority and voluntary-run homes - who were the responsibility of the local authority, were inspected by that local authority. That is, children were visited by a childcare officer or a councillor.
- Children who had been placed in a voluntary run children's home by a private individual were seemingly not subject to inspection at all.

Where voluntary homes were concerned, the responsibility for individual children placed there by the local authority was the province of the boarding out authority as they were treated as boarded-out children, albeit they were in a residential care home. Where the *running* of the institution was concerned, this fell to the SHD. They did conduct inspections addressing staffing, facilities, general environment and opportunities for the children though it is unclear how often these took place as the inspection reports for all institutions have not been identified in the archive.

Thus, the Scottish Office had oversight and ultimate responsibility for the quality of care being provided in residential institutions and had the power to close an institution on the basis of its assessment. However, as we shall see in the following case studies, the identification of poor care regimes rarely resulted in action being taken (or at least being recorded) and no homes were closed at the insistence of the Secretary of State.

Here we outline the inspection procedures as they were conducted by local authorities and the Scottish Office respectively under the 1948 and 1959 Regulations.

#### Local authority inspection of children's homes

Local authority run children's homes were inspected regularly by their own Children's Committees. The visits tended to concentrate on the fabric of the buildings, staffing levels, equipment, level of usage and so on. In Glasgow on 27 August 1948, the Welfare Committee discussed new procedures for the visitation of children's homes:

The committee, after consideration, agreed that it be remitted to Councillors David Johnstone and Russell, along with the Director of Welfare Services, to prepare a list of members of the committee to visit in rotation on a monthly basis the Reception and Residential Homes for Children and the Remand Home.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> GCA, C1/3/118: Children's Committee 7 Sept 1948, p. 1842.

At a meeting of the Glasgow Children's Committee on 7 Sept 1948, the issue of reports on children's homes was mentioned for the first time. A list of dates for visiting homes (by councillors) was submitted and approved.<sup>328</sup> It is clear that visits were being undertaken to local authority and voluntary run homes on a regular basis as the Children's Committee monthly meeting minutes record that reports were received on these visits. However, the reports themselves have not been located in the historical record therefore it is not possible to assess the level or effectiveness of local authority inspection of their own institutions. Councillors were not trained to undertake inspections of institutions or the children placed there.

Voluntary homes that cared for children placed there by the local authority were not formally inspected by the local authority. The quality of care provided in the home was the responsibility of the home's management board. Members of the Children's Committee and local authority childcare officers were responsible for visiting individual children in these homes. There is no evidence that those who undertook these inspections had any training, but presumably they were aware of the regulations governing the running of these homes.

In Glasgow the task of inspection of children in residential care was immense. This meant keeping tabs on hundreds of children at any one time scattered around a variety of homes, some run by the Corporation, others by voluntary providers and not all within the Glasgow area. However, children in Glasgow Corporation homes were visited by the Medical Officer on a monthly basis (or every two months in the case of children in the Highlands and Dunoon). Hereafter children were also visited by the Welfare Officer.

Councillors who were members of the Children's Committee and Corporation childcare officers did visit local authority and voluntary homes on a regular basis on a rota system which was agreed, at least in the early decades, at meetings of the Children's Committee. These visits were ostensibly to inspect specific children in these homes rather than the home itself. We do know that individual children were seen by councillors and welfare or childcare officers as these visits were recorded in the children's individual case files (usually merely noting that a visit had taken place) and in the records kept by institutions. Smyllum, for example, maintained a visitors' log book which recorded visits by officials and identifies the names of those children

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<sup>328</sup> GCA, C1/3/118: Children's Committee 7 Sept 1948. p. 1907.

'seen'.<sup>329</sup> Any details recorded on the welfare of the children tended to be quite general. For example, in 1949 Smyllum was visited by members of Glasgow Corporation including the children's welfare officer. The log book recorded: '[i]nterviewed all the children who all appeared very healthy and happy. The conditions in the home appear very satisfactory.'<sup>330</sup>

It is not clear whether those councillors who visited the children in residential care had any training or how they recorded their observations. We have not identified any evidence in the written record of councillor visitors to children identifying cases of mistreatment or abuse, although it is not likely that this would have been recorded in the home's log book. However, without reviewing all the children's case files held by the Corporation we cannot rule out the possibility that mistreatment would have been noted on a child's case file.

### Scottish Office Inspection

The precise administrative arrangement for inspection is somewhat unclear from the surviving historical record. The following outlines the system as it operated as far as we have been able to discern from surviving records for the period 1948-c.1968.

The Child Care Division, or 'Branch' as it is sometimes referred to, was based in the SHD following the Children Act 1948. All residential children's homes—voluntary or local authority run—were inspected by the SHD until 1960 when responsibility for childcare was moved to the SED though it appears this did not substantively affect the inspection process—it seems to have permitted slightly more granular reports and permitted the inspector more discretion in what he or she focused on.

Inspections of both local authority Children's Departments and Residential institutions (local authority and voluntary run) were carried out by the Inspectorate for Child Care and Probation which operated semi-autonomously within the Scottish Office, although much of their work was obviously closely aligned with the childcare division or 'Branch'. In the notes of a meeting of inspectors in 1958 the following 5 points were made regarding the function and purposes of the Inspectorate:

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<sup>329</sup> Smyllum Orphanage Visitors' Log Book, 1937-64.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid., entry for 15 Nov. 1949.

1. The function of the Inspectorate is constructive by assisting in the maintenance and, where possible, the raising of standards of childcare and probation in Scotland.
2. The inspectors are required to inspect as often as is necessary those organisations, institutions and practices for which the Secretary of State is responsible under the various laws relating to the care and training of children, and to probation, and to report in as much detail as is required their aims, organisation and methods.
3. The inspectorate is required to express an opinion to the Department on the degree of efficiency with which the organisations operate and, when necessary, make recommendations for their improvement. Suggestions for rectifying any minor defects may in some cases be made by the inspector directly to the officials concerned. Others may be made through the Chief inspector, or through Division. In all major matters the last will be the method adopted.
4. The Inspectorate is required, on the one hand, to advise the department on policy, and on the other, to advise authorities by suggestion and persuasion of the policy of the Department.
5. The inspectorate is required to observe and report on whether Homes, Hostels, Boarding-out, Remand Homes, Probation Services are conducted according to the rules memoranda and general policy of the Department.<sup>331</sup>

There was no reference to individual children's welfare, which was the responsibility of local authorities. The focus of the inspectorate was to ensure homes met appropriate standards (although these were never clearly articulated) and to encourage or persuade local authority Children's Departments to implement changes where required.<sup>332</sup>

Further minutes between the Chief Inspector (C. R. Corner) and a senior civil servant in the SED concerned whether the above suggestions had been discussed with

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<sup>331</sup> NRS, ED11/612: Inspection Reports on Children's Homes and Child Care Arrangements: Procedure for handlers 1962-1964.

<sup>332</sup> NRS, ED11/612: Inspection Reports on Children's Homes and Child Care Arrangements: Procedure for handlers 1962-1964.

inspectors and asked if/when they were going to be implemented. Corner replied on 29 July 1963 as follows:

When we discussed your paper I think we agreed that it did not raise anything which had not been previously considered thoroughly by the Administrators and Inspectors. We agreed I think we would not reach conclusions, that each inspection and each report as well as each Inspector is unique and we should not attempt to standardise methods too much. We also agreed alas that the last word may not be mine and I can leave no objections to matters on which the Department have decided.<sup>333</sup>

So this seems to confirm that inspectors had a degree of autonomy and that inspections did not generally follow a prearranged format. The inspector or inspectors would visit the institution and observe the general environment, including the atmosphere that pertained in the home, the quality and quantity of fixtures and fittings, the provision of toys and games, quality and quantity of food, nature of dormitories and sleeping arrangements, discipline and punishment regimes, record keeping, and the quality of staff amongst other things. He or she would in situ provide verbal advice to the officer or matron in charge of the home/or the children's officer of a children's department. A report would be written to include what he/she had observed in the home, which would also include recording any advice provided during the visit. The report would then be sent to the Chief Inspector in the Scottish Office with a recommendation about whether the inspection required any action. (It may be assumed that anything that required action was passed to the Children's Branch.) In 1962 there was a discussion with the SHD regarding the administrative procedure relating to the inspection process within the Scottish Office. Before this discussion took place, we are unable to tell if reports recommending 'no action' were also looked over by administration in the Children's Branch. Where reports are extant there is no record on the file to tell what was done with them.

However, in an SHD report on the issue of inspection generally, written by I. M. Wilson, and dated 11 October 1963, the procedure followed in the Home Office in London is described in detail. This, presumably, was more or less what had been followed in Edinburgh until this point:

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<sup>333</sup> NRS, ED11/612: Inspection Reports on Children's Homes and Child Care Arrangements, minute 15/10/1962.

## Inspection Reports of Children's Homes and of Local authority Child Care Arrangements

1) Procedure for handling Inspection Reports is as follows: -

(i) In the case of many inspections of children's homes no particular point arises. In such circumstances, although a Report is prepared, the administrative Division does not normally see it.

(ii) In the case of children's homes where the inspection does reveal points which require attention the Inspectors are able in most instances to clear these points on the spot. In such cases, however, the action taken is mentioned in the inspection Report and the Report is passed for information to the administrative Division.

(iii) In all cases where a local authority's child care services are inspected, whether or not any points have arisen, the Inspection Report is passed to the administrative division for information. Such reports are normally seen at H.E.O. and Principal level.

(iv) In cases where serious inadequacies are revealed by an inspection, the Inspection Report sets out the position in detail and normally makes recommendations. The Report is then referred to the administrative Division for any necessary action. This category of case can be sub-divided into:

a) Cases where a straightforward letter from the Division is all that is required, e.g. a letter drawing attention to specific faults in the fire escape arrangements.

b) Cases where a full-scale meeting is thought necessary, e.g. where the Inspection Report reveals serious inadequacies in a local authority's child care services as a whole. In this type of case the normal arrangement is for the Division to send out a letter indicating broadly what is felt to be wrong and seeking a meeting with representatives of the local authority concerned; in such a meeting both administrative and inspectorial staff would take part.

2) Circulation of Inspection Reports to Local Authorities etc.

The Inspection Reports are never sent to the local authorities or voluntary bodies concerned. This is not because of any particular difficulty which has arisen at any time in the past, but because it is felt that, if the reports were sent out in this way, they would of necessity have to be less frank than they are at present and hence would be of less value to the Department. From time to time individual local authorities have asked for Inspection Reports, and the Home Office reply has been to the effect that these are confidential documents for the information of the Secretary of State and that any points of substance raised in



them have either been discussed at the time with the authorities by the Inspectors or have been covered subsequently in letters from the Department.<sup>334</sup>

What is particularly notable here is point 2, that reports were not routinely sent to local authorities because this would compromise the frankness with which they were written (and we can assume this also applied to inspections of local authority children's homes inspected by the SHD). It is also unclear whether inspection reports were generally sent to the institutions under inspection. We have not identified evidence that this was the case.

The reports for some, though not all, institutions have been retained. The majority of inspection reports extant are for the period c.1958-1970. The following case studies have been chosen to flag particular issues that were raised by Scottish Office inspectors and different approaches to addressing those issues in a number of different types of home: local authority and voluntary, reception and long term. We also detail two case studies outside the Glasgow area in order to enable comparisons between Glasgow, the largest local authority provider of children's services, and smaller local authorities outwith the urban central belt. We summarise each case study below before providing a fuller account.

#### Case Study VIX: Quarrier's Homes (Voluntary home)

This case study highlights a wide range of issues for serious concern identified by the inspectors in Scotland's largest voluntary home that was used by local authorities and private individuals. This is a key case study for understanding how the inspection regime operated in practice when the inspection report contained key recommendations for change. It demonstrates how the inspectorate communicated with the institution and the degree of leverage it had to insist on change.

Quarrier's Homes at Bridge of Weir was subject to an SED Inspection visit by five members of SED staff led by Miss M J Morrison over three weeks in January 1965. The length of visit and the number of staff involved was unprecedented. It was subsequently inspected on shorter follow up visits in 1966, 1967, and 1968 (when there were two visits, two months apart). The home was then seemingly not inspected again until 1972 and again in 1974. There are no existing reports for the period between 1968 and 1972.

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<sup>334</sup> NRS, ED11/612: report, 11/10/1963.

The 1965 inspection by the SHD was in depth and unusually detailed, perhaps owing to its size—at this time Quarrier’s looked after around 500 children—and also because the SED had some very real concerns. The report addressed the Homes as a whole as well as inspecting individual cottages. The resulting report concluded with a series of lengthy recommendations that addressed issues such as: the isolation of the homes, poor record keeping, inadequate ongoing staff training, understaffing, disciplinary practices and the inadequate support for children with psychological disturbance.

The overriding concern of the inspectors was the relative size, isolation and culture of the Homes. On page 1 of the report the SED remarks, ‘however the isolation...is probably less important than the social introspection, the methods and traditions it has engendered, especially when imposed on a large community of deprived children.’<sup>335</sup> Moreover, whilst it was observed that ‘considerable improvements’ had taken place in the last 18 months in respect to staffing, ‘leadership [was] lacking, organisation and supervision [were] unsatisfactory, and general morale [was] low.’<sup>336</sup> Particular criticism was directed at the Director, Dr Davidson, and the Matron. The Director was described by inspectors as ‘remote, impatient with those less intelligent than himself. He has supported the Superintendent in his improvements but not to a sufficient degree. He has failed to give sufficient leadership, to define responsibilities, to improve organisation, and to create a team.’<sup>337</sup>

Later in the report he was described as ‘intellectually autocratic’. The Matron, Miss Morrison, was a trained nurse, as was common with many of those in her position across the residential childcare sector. The inspectors were of the view that

This demanding job has proved beyond her capacities. She has aged beyond her years, has retreated into administrative details, and almost completely neglects her real duties of supervising and supporting the houseparents and studying the wellbeing of the children.’<sup>338</sup>

Whilst there was no hard evidence in the report or in the recommendations that children were being mistreated or were at risk from mistreatment or abuse, the

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<sup>335</sup> NRS, ED 11/708/2: Voluntary Homes—Quarrier’s Homes inspectors reports. 1965 Report. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

explicit criticism of the running of the institution indicates the SED had some concerns about the wellbeing and development of the children there. Whilst the homes employed a child psychologist, she was only used for intelligence testing. 'She is not called in to reviews of children nor is her expertise employed in assisting houseparents in their care and treatment of children.'<sup>339</sup> The report summarised the main deficiencies in the organisation of the Homes as follows:

- Failure to define standards, methods and consequent policies
- Lack of consultation, at policy level, between Director and senior staff
- Defects in supervision, guidance and support for houseparents
- Dissipation of control of administrative functions and its staff
- Defects in domestic management in the cottages
- A possible top heaviness in common services and other direct labour
- Defective systems of recording<sup>340</sup>

Although the report never explicitly referred to physical or emotional abuse in the language of the day, the inspectors did note that 'we found no recognised standard, system or outlook on discipline and much depended on the outlook, training and capacity of the houseparents.' It was identified that some houseparents used the strap. 'One houseparent admitted strapping adolescent girls of 13 and 14 although she understood that the orders from the 'office' were that girls over 10 years and boys over 12 years should not be strapped.'<sup>341</sup> The report concluded: 'We are disturbed about the present system which permits houseparents to punish as they think fit.'<sup>342</sup>

This was a report that, with the exception of the nurseries for very young children, identified more defects than positive elements. Despite operating a family group approach with children housed in small groups in cottages, the SED held strong reservations about the quality of care. Over the course of the three weeks almost all cottages were separately inspected, identifying significant differences between them.

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<sup>339</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

Whilst some cottages were well run and children were able to thrive, others were run by houseparents with no training and outmoded attitudes. The following three examples from the cottage reports offer a sense of how the regimes in cottages could differ significantly depending to large part on the capability and character of the houseparents.

#### Cottage 24

Cottage 24 housed 14 children of both sexes and was run by a married couple in their twenties with a baby on the way. The couple had extremely limited experience with children prior to taking up the position in 1964. Their only experience had been with church youth clubs and a visit to a children's home in London. The inspector remarked that they 'appeared bewildered and out of their depth.' Not only were they unprepared for the work but in the inspector's opinion they had been asked to care for 'an extremely difficult group of children' which included two families of siblings with very troubled backgrounds. Four children were enuretic, another was afraid of men. In his conclusion the inspector commented:

The visit made to this home pinpointed a number of weaknesses in the general administration and in the training and supervision of houseparent staff. ...The couple have had neither the training or experience that would equip them to give the skilled care these particular children need.

The Quarrier's Superintendent was informed of the inspector's 'feelings' about this home.<sup>343</sup>

This cottage was not unusual in being run by houseparents ill-experienced and ill-equipped for the task. The majority of cottages were run 'on institutional lines'. Untrained and unsuitable houseparents resorted to the imposition of routine in order to be able to cope with the children in their care.

#### Cottage 54

The conditions in Cottage 54, which housed only boys, were especially troubling in respect of the culture in which the children were looked after by a married couple who were ex-Salvation Army officers with no prior experience of childcare. They were

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid. Report on Cottage 24.

assisted by a 'domestic' five days a week. The inspector observed mealtime and remarked:

The meal was eaten in almost complete silence. A clock-work-like routine was observed thereafter, two boys drying dishes, one washing pots, one cleaning the stove top, others helping younger boys dress for school. Although no use of the strap is shown in the Young's records of punishment since 1959 Mrs Young said that she sometimes showed the strap and used it in a fashion which she tried to describe as trifling. The attitude I observed in the children, the lack of spontaneity, animation or response contributed to my opinion that the Youngs have a very limited conception of their function and, making allowance for the routine created by tradition and by limited staff, limited idea of methods of giving a comforting substitute for parental care. Pocket money is not issued but is kept by Mr Young and entered in a book and given on demand—he says the children prefer this. Clothing, apart from Sunday suits and coats is not individually identified or stored. The home was cold and cheerless. Routine overshadows all.<sup>344</sup>

### Cottage 5

By contrast, the culture in Cottage 5 overseen by the McBreartys who had two young children of their own, was strikingly warm and enabling. Whilst neither houseparent had any experience of childcare before coming to Quarrier's they were clearly temperamentally suited to the role according to the inspector, who was very taken with the way they related to the children, 12 boys and girls.<sup>345</sup> In contrast with Cottage 54, mealtimes in this home were taken in the kitchen, the children were 'chatty and the occasion a social one.' In the afternoon the pre-school age children watched 'Watch with Mother' on television—'this was a nice intimate interlude for the little ones to have the full attention of Mrs McBrearty.' In the evening the older children played with games, books and a record player. 'The McBreartys were involved in all that the children were doing and it was interesting that I could not have distinguished the McBrearty children from the rest.' The inspector clearly regarded this cottage as a model for others:

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid., Report on Cottage 54.

<sup>345</sup> It should be noted that McBrearty was later prosecuted for sexually abusing children, demonstrating the limits of inspection for being able to identify actual abuse. See Quarrier's report p. 17, ft. 66.

Mr and Mrs McBrearty are a good example of a couple with very ordinary intelligence but with big hearts, hardworking and using to the full the very quality and skill they have in being very good parents to the children and good members of the community.<sup>346</sup>

Inspectors do seem to have spent time in the cottages at all times of the day and to have observed and in some cases spoken to the children. They were alert to the demeanour of children, commenting on whether children seemed bright and talkative and had positive relationships with their houseparents or whether they were dour or uncommunicative as was the case in cottage 24 run on a disciplinary model.

Despite the islands of good practice in some cottages, the overall assessment of the inspectors in this Report was that '[t]his children's village, begun by Wm Quarrier to re-dress the suffering of past generations of children, is no longer in accord with the accepted standards of child care.'<sup>347</sup>

There is every indication that the inspectorate were seriously concerned about children's development and welfare owing to the relative isolation of the home and the culture that prevailed within it. They also had some concerns about how children were treated with the use of corporal punishment highlighted, as well as the failure to employ the child psychologist to ensure children's emotional needs were met.

The recommendations were far reaching and covered almost all aspects of the running of the Homes. The SED had the power to authorise the closure of Quarrier's Homes, but instead it offered the Homes the opportunity to make the improvements required. (There is no evidence that closure was ever considered.)

The recommendations were conveyed to the Director of Quarrier's in a letter from the SED on 2 September 1965. There was a subsequent meeting on 13 December 1965 at Quarrier's with members of the SED inspectorate including its head I.M Wilson, the Director and other members of the Homes Executive committee when the recommendations were discussed and Quarrier's reported to the SED officials

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<sup>346</sup> NRS, ED 11/708/2: Voluntary Homes—Quarrier's Homes inspectors reports. 1965 Report. Report on Cottage 5. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., p. 27



that improvements were underway.<sup>348</sup> Indeed they had already instituted some changes. In a summary of the meeting it was concluded by the SED:

We felt that our meeting went very well, that Dr Davidson accepted our suggestions as useful and helpful, that he will continue to improve the lot of the children and staff resident there, and that he will continue to consider how best his Homes can develop to meet the needs of the children needing care.<sup>349</sup>

SED Inspectors maintained a watching brief on Quarrier's in subsequent years when they conducted short visits to monitor progress on the recommendations. Quite quickly it was clear that changes were afoot, in part it seems due to the appointment of a new Superintendent (Minto), who had come from a children's home in India.<sup>350</sup> New procedures had been introduced such as case conferences, and a more child-centred and personalised approach was being followed. There was a new admissions procedure whereby greater consideration was given to the cottage in which a child should be placed (rather than being slotted in where there was a space), and older girls were given an allowance to buy their own clothes.<sup>351</sup>

This case study of a series of inspections of Quarrier's Homes between 1965 and 1974 indicates the slow pace of change in the voluntary residential childcare sector despite a damning inspection report. It also demonstrates how the inspection regime was supposed to work. Once the report was written and recommendations made it was escalated to the Chief Inspector and the administrative branch who then were responsible for ensuring that Quarrier's actioned the recommendations.<sup>352</sup> But given the 1965 report was possibly the most critical of any delivered by the Scottish Office inspectorate in this period, it is difficult to imagine the circumstances in which a home would be closed.

#### Case Study X: Clyde Cottage, Dunoon

This case study highlights the issue of inadequate staffing and how the environment and culture of an institution was dependent on the character and ability of the matron in charge. It also demonstrates the inadequacy of local authority inspection

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<sup>348</sup> NRS, ED11/708/2: memo from I. M. Wilson (SED) to Miss Strongman (SED). 13 Dec 1965. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., Minute of SED visit to Quarrier's, 4.1.66.

<sup>350</sup> <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12111026.dr-james-r-minto/>.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 1966 and 1967 inspection reports.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., SED minute, 14.12.65 and Minute of SED visit to Quarrier's 4.1.66.

of its own homes and the tendency for the Scottish Office inspectorate to wring its hands but take no effective action to enforce improvement.

Clyde cottage was a small Glasgow Corporation home for girls returned from boarding out between the ages of five and 14.<sup>353</sup> It was some distance from Glasgow on the coast at Dunoon. Between 1959 and 1965 there is a record of concerns expressed by the Scottish Office inspectorate about the environment of this home, but until the issue of staffing was addressed with the replacement of the housemother, little progress was made.

This is a rather typical case of a local authority children's home that was struggling in a childcare culture that could do little for the children in its care, particularly in view of the fact that the resident girls had been moved there from other placements and were described as 'difficult'.<sup>354</sup> The home was inspected in 1955 and then in 1959, 1961 and twice in 1965 and 1967. All the reports were submitted to the Chief Inspector. There is no suggestion in any of the Scottish Office reports that the children were vulnerable to mistreatment or abuse; however the fact that there was inadequate record-keeping until 1965 is of concern. Moreover, there was an absence of local authority oversight, childcare of the children in one of its more remote homes that highlights a systemic failure.

A number of concerns were raised about this home throughout the period for which we have inspection reports and the summary below illustrates these as well as the absence of change:

1955: Report states that staffing is inadequate, dormitories are overcrowded and the diet provided is 'unsatisfactory'. The girls were visited by the local Minister once a week and a 'social evening' was held on a Friday, other than this, the girls could join the local Girls' Guildry and attend drama classes, but it was commented that recreation facilities in the home were 'very bare'.

1959: The inspector commented that the housemother 'was elderly' and 'unable to enter into the lives of the girls'. He also commented that progress reports were not kept and that three of the girls were enuretic.

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<sup>353</sup> NRS, ED11-524-1: Clyde Cottage Dunoon, Inspector's reports 1955-73.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., Inspection report 1959.

1961: Still no progress reports kept. On this occasion, the inspector drew the attention of this omission to the Housemother as being part of the 'regulations' for homes.

The Children's Officer was told about the lack of attention to the recording of fire precautions and about the lack of progress reports and promises were made to rectify these. The inspector concluded that the 'home continues to fulfil a useful function. It is running reasonably well'.

1965 (Jan): 'all [the girls] have come here because of special difficulties, e.g. returned from boarding-out with foster parents for various reasons; they appeared docile and uncommunicative; only one small girl of eleven years spoke spontaneously and was bright and cheery.' There were problems still with record keeping: a log book was now kept but had not been kept up to date with very few entries for December and January. Progress reports were in place but again, entries were few. The report concludes that the home is comfortable and 'adequately furnished' but that the matron was likely not able 'to give the girls the emotional warmth or outlook desirable'. It was stated that the 'home was running well within the limits of the matron's abilities'.

1965 (Nov): new housemother appointed— 'capable and enlightened'. Improvements made with record keeping and to the fixtures and fittings of the building. On approach to discipline: 'constructive discipline and routine where the children build up self respect.'<sup>355</sup>

The home continued to improve. It appears from the reports that this was in large part owing to the quality and character of the new housemother in charge who improved record keeping, the quality of the environment and attitudes towards the girls.

Despite elaborate mechanisms for inspection there appeared to be very little done about the issues detected for some years and the 'matron' had the last word. There was no attempt to remove her. The reports on this home though indicate failures of inspection at the local authority level. Throughout this period it is recorded by the SHD inspectors that there were frequent visitors to the home by Glasgow councillors as part of their statutory duty but these visits were merely recorded (in 1967 for

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid. Inspection Reports 1955-65.

instance, councillors visited in March, April, June, July, August and October); we are not able to identify whether changes were made in response to these visits.

Perhaps more seriously, although the Glasgow Children's Officer visited once a month, childcare officers who were responsible for the individual children never visited, apparently owing to the need for them to stay overnight when visiting Dunoon and staff shortages in Glasgow prevented this. When a child was admitted to the home the childcare officer would deliver the child to Gourrock on the mainland and a member of staff from the home would travel there to collect the child. In 1965 the new housemother remarked that it did 'not provide a satisfactory introduction of the children to the Home' and meant there was no opportunity for the housemother to discuss the child's needs with the Officer.

The absence of attention to the needs of individual children in this case highlight a more general concern. It was made clear in 1968 when the entire Glasgow Children's Department was subject to an inspection by the SWSG that there was a lack of awareness within the Department and at least on the part of the Convenor of the Children's Committee that each individual child should be the responsibility of a childcare officer. According to representatives of the Association of Child Care Officers (ACCO), who commented on the results of the inspection, what had

caused them great concern was that concepts of modern child care practice seemed to come as a complete surprise to the Convenor of the Children's Committee ...the suggestion that a child care officer should be responsible for each individual child in a children's home seemed to be new to the convenor and Committee members.<sup>356</sup>

The implications of this is that in the case of Glasgow, at least until the late 1960s, the pressing need to find homes for children took precedence over the consideration of children's individual needs.

#### Case Study XI: Eversley Children's Home (Glasgow Corporation)

This case study demonstrates how a home described as barely adequate in respect of children's development continued to operate largely unchanged despite regular inspections.

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<sup>356</sup> NRS, ED11/731/2: Child Care Arrangements - Note of a meeting with representatives of ACCO, 9 April 1968, p. 60. CLOSED FILE.

Eversley home in Pollokshields, Glasgow, was requisitioned during the war as a home for Poor Law children and those committed to the care of the Education authority. It continued in use for this purpose after the war, housing around 30 children placed there by Glasgow Corporation. It was inspected by the SED in 1961, in 1963 and thereafter inspections in 1965, 1967 and 1968. It was also inspected by the SWSG in 1972. There are no inspection reports for the intervening years. This likely indicates that this home was not inspected annually by the SED but we cannot be certain.

Eversley presents an example of a local authority children's home that—despite regular inspections and recommendations for improvements over 12 years by the SED—changed little. The inspections highlighted a series of issues over the years, from persistent overcrowding to an unstimulating environment and unqualified staff. However, the Glasgow Corporation Children's Officer who was keen to make changes, struggled with inadequate resources and a Children's Committee that was somewhat blind to the problems besetting these kinds of homes. The Scottish Office inspectors were well aware of the pressure Glasgow was under, noting in 1963 that this heavy pressure (of numbers of children requiring care, lack of suitable accommodation and staff) 'complicates any efforts to improve the pattern of residential care'.<sup>357</sup>

In this case the SED recommended the appointment of two additional childcare officers to help to develop alternative options for children which in turn would relieve pressure on Eversley and another home in similar circumstances, Blairvadach. They wanted to avoid the enlargement of Eversley, the option favoured by the Children's Committee. The new appointees would help to develop short term foster care and review children admitted more speedily to enable them to be boarded out or returned to their parents; in short to enable Glasgow to implement prevention. The SED recognised the challenges faced by the Glasgow Children's Officer: 'Mr McLeish has inherited many problems...and will need all the encouragement, guidance and support we can give him'.<sup>358</sup>

Ultimately one additional childcare officer was appointed rather than two, and although the Children's Committee rescinded its plan to expand Eversley home, it subsequently converted the outhouses for additional staff accommodation thereby freeing up space in the main building for four more children. A year later in 1965 the

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<sup>357</sup> NRS, ED11/525/2: Eversley Children's Home—note of meeting between inspector and Glasgow Children's Officer, 27 Sept 1963. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid. CLOSED FILE.

home was still overcrowded (33 children resident when it had the capacity for 30) and there were still concerns about the environment:

There is lack of colour and comfort in the building. The playroom is completely bare. There are only hard seats in the dining room which is also used for watching television. There are no pictures, apart from nursery transfers fixed too high in the toddlers room [sic]. There are no carpets in the children's part of the house...the play room has no equipment. Large toys, brought from the cupboard in the hall are available for the under-fives in the afternoon. The children have nowhere to keep individual possessions, and do not appear to have any. They do not necessarily keep their own clothes in their bedrooms. These are housed in large group cupboards ...the children do not possess individual towels...<sup>359</sup>

Whilst there was no intimation of physical mistreatment in any of the reports on this home, the impression given is of an institution that was barely adequate, run on a medical model with insufficient and inadequately trained staff. Children were physically looked after but this was at the cost of their emotional and educational development. In 1968 the inspector commented on the quality of childcare that: 'This is as good as the severe pressure on the Home allows it to be.'<sup>360</sup> Young children were in danger of being disadvantaged because of the lack of opportunities for 'controlled exploration and development'.<sup>361</sup>

#### Case Study XII: St Olaf's Home, Kirkaldy (Local authority reception home)

This case study of a small reception home in a small local authority illustrates a number of issues pertinent to the operation of the 1948 Act brought into stark relief following charges against the matron on the grounds of cruelty.

St Olaf's was opened with great fanfare in 1949 and touted as fully meeting the requirements of the 1948 legislation in terms of providing a reception home for children brought into the care of the local authority. It was located in the centre of Kirkaldy, not in a remote district, meaning children could attend a local school, were easily overseen by officials on a regular basis, and gave the appearance of living at the centre of the community. Yet as this case shows, adhering to the letter of

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<sup>359</sup> NRS, ED11/525/2: Eversley Children's Home, Inspection Report 1965. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 1968 Inspection report. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.



legislation did not necessarily ensure that child welfare was delivered successfully, or that regular oversight of children prevented mistreatment. The medical model imposed and encouraged by this system of reception increased stress in young children, most likely because of the inexperience of the staff and their ignorance of contemporary psychological approaches to dealing with vulnerable children.

The home was presided over by the matron, Miss Rumgay, who had been appointed in 1949 'with excellent qualifications. She had been a matron at Pitlochry for five years and an assistant matron at County Durham. She had also done missionary work amongst the children of China. The committee were satisfied they had made a good choice'.<sup>362</sup> However in 1953 the matron was accused of cruelty towards the children in her care. The allegations only came to light when a member of staff at the home handed in her resignation and on a 'casual meeting with the Kirkaldy Children's Officer ... mentioned something about the home'.<sup>363</sup> The allegations comprised:

the forcible feeding of one child, securing younger children in their beds by means of string or tape, of placing children behind a fireguard, and of putting children in a cloakroom on their own. The matron had admitted the allegation, was unashamed of her conduct and believed that she had made appropriate decisions on how to implement discipline in the home.<sup>364</sup>

The most important issue raised in this case is the question of what constituted reasonable measures of discipline and how the regulations on discipline were interpreted and it is very evident that there was no consensus on this matter. When Kirkaldy Town Council came to discuss the issue it rejected a recommendation of its own Children's Committee and the female Children's Officer that the matron be severely censured and a number of councillors failed to take the allegations seriously. One, with reference to the allegation of forcible feeding remarked that he had 'forcibly fed his own children and he was not afraid to say so'.<sup>365</sup> It is also of note that the fifth complaint made against the matron (regarding the matron ridiculing children who bed wet) was not included in the charges of misconduct. Given how widespread this problem was for children in care, the reluctance to include this does suggest that making fun of such children was not a matter that was taken very seriously. Indeed, one member of the council seems to applaud the effectiveness of

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<sup>362</sup> Fifeshire Advertiser, 3 Dec 1949, p. 9.

<sup>363</sup> Fifeshire Advertiser, 18 April 1953 (continuation from p. 1).

<sup>364</sup> Fife Free Press, & Kirkaldy Guardian, 18 April 1953, p. 8.

<sup>365</sup> Fifeshire Advertiser, 18 April 1953.

this method used by the matron: 'quite a number of children had come into the home with that complaint and, because of her treatment, had gone out cured.'<sup>366</sup> Also of note, is that the allegation that children had been tied to their beds was not taken seriously by some councillors, or indeed, by the Medical Officer of Health who described this as common and necessary. The conclusion of the convenor of the town council was that the matron had an

extremely difficult job to carrying out the wishes of those sitting round the table and she had his entire sympathy. He thought she should be complimented for way she ran her home. He did not say she should give the children a right good thrashing as he did but she had to instil some type of discipline in the home. They should pass a vote of confidence her.<sup>367</sup>

Firstly then, this case highlighted the range of opinions on the administering of punishment and discipline in children's homes revealing a division between those like the (female) Children's Officer who were attempting to instil higher standards of childcare and those of her (male) Medical Officer of Health and some members of the town council who undermined her (she and the matron both resigned a few months later). The predominant view of those who refused to censure the matron was that children in care were prone to be 'difficult' and certain disciplinary measures were warranted. And in the view of one town councillor who rejected the censure of the matron, it was she who had suffered: '...the one you have hurt most in the Children's Home is the matron ...no matter what your decision shall be.'<sup>368</sup>

Second, the St Olaf's case illustrates the competing interests in this arena in the wake of the reorganisation of children's services. During the council debate it became clear that there were obvious deficiencies in local authority oversight of children's care. Members of the Children's Committee had visited the home on numerous occasions and 'never had any member been approached by the staff or any complaint been made.'<sup>369</sup>

Those competing interests were to the detriment of the care and safety of children. When the Scottish Home Department was asked to come in and investigate the Kirkaldy Children's Department in the wake of the St Olaf's affair, the town council

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

<sup>368</sup> Fifeshire Advertiser, 18 April 1953.

<sup>369</sup> Fifeshire Advertiser, 18 April 1953.

was indignant that the council was not able to conduct its own inquiry without the involvement of the Scottish Office.<sup>370</sup> The Home Department did go on to inspect the Children's Department in 1953 but there is no surviving record of this apart from a note at the start of the SED inspection file for St Olaf's that provided a summary of the events of 1953.

The next record we have of an inspection of this home is 1965, which was largely positive although the home was still experiencing staffing problems; the matron in charge was still someone with a primarily nursing background who struggled with older children and there had been a vacancy for a deputy matron for some time.<sup>371</sup> In 1968 following the resignation of the matron from ill health, it was noted that three successive press advertisements for houseparents or a matron for St Olaf's had elicited no response though houseparents were finally appointed later that year. The Children's Department was also inspected that year and again in 1967, revealing the high caseload of staff and the difficulties encountered in sending staff for training on account of the weight of work.<sup>372</sup>

The case of St Olaf's and the Kirkaldy Children's Department demonstrates a range of factors over a number of years that combined to potentially compromise children's residential care: competing interests between Children's Officers and Medical Officers of Health, poorly trained and inexperienced care staff, poor understandings of how to appropriately discipline children, failing local authority inspection regimes, resentment of the power of the Scottish Office and added to all of this, attitudes to children in care on the part of some in authority which did little to protect them from abuse. Many of the individuals entrusted with the day-to-day care of children in these institutions were poorly prepared for the task. Whilst the care of very young children might be placed in the hands of nursery nurses, the experience of matrons and houseparents was inadequate for the challenges posed by older children. The case of Clydeville in Buckie, the next case study, amplifies this observation.

#### Case Study XIII: Clydeville Children's Home, Buckie, Banffshire (local authority)

This case study highlights how a local authority and the Scottish Office dealt with evidence of excessive punishment inflicted on children by staff.

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<sup>370</sup> Fife Free Press and Kirkaldy Guardian, 17 Jan 1953.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid., St Olaf's Inspection report, 1965. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid., Kirkaldy Children's Department inspection report, 1968. CLOSED FILE.

This case study is illustrative of the process that was put in place when a local authority was informed of allegations of excessive corporal punishment in one of its children's homes. This is an unusual occurrence. Notifications or allegations of mistreatment or abuse in children's homes are relatively rare in the written record. Other institutions where physical mistreatment was alleged are Gryffe home and Lochaber home (both run by Glasgow local authority). The Gryffe case was not dissimilar to that in Clydeville whereby the information about mistreatment of children was not gathered by an official inspection, but reported externally. In the Gryffe case it was children themselves who complained to a houseparent in another home that they had been physically abused.<sup>373</sup> In the case of Clydeville a child who had recently left the home had informed an army recruiting officer of the mistreatment.

Clydeville was a small local authority home with around 15 children resident at any one time and was mostly used for reception and short-term care. The local authority Children's Officer was said to have visited on a regular basis. The home was run by a matron who had a nursing background, no experience of running a children's home, but had 'attended the Department's refresher course' in 1955.<sup>374</sup> Some years later, in 1961 when the home was inspected by the SED, it was noted that the matron 'did not always see eye to eye' with the Children's Officer of Banffshire 'and that she did not willingly accept children who presented problems.' The Children's Officer's view was that 'he would rather have a housefather and housemother in charge but added that Miss Mark was a close personal friend of the Children's Committee Chairman and that this reduced his authority'.<sup>375</sup> When the home was next inspected in 1963 the matron had been replaced by another who once again seems not to have had any experience in a residential care setting:

Mrs <sup>DQT</sup> [REDACTED] is 50 years of age, a native of Glasgow, and became a widow two years ago... Prior to her marriage she was [REDACTED] with Stewart and Lloyds of Coatbridge where she worked for 23 years. Her previous experience with

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<sup>373</sup> See NRS, ED11/698: Conviction of Foster Parents of a Boarded-out Boy [REDACTED] which includes a report on the investigation onto excessive punishment at Gryffe home.

<sup>374</sup> NRS, ED11/533/1: Local Authority Children's Homes; Clydeville Buckie, note on file, May 1955. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid., Inspection report, 1961.

children has been as a Sunday School Teacher, as leader of a junior choir and in charge of teenage girls and young adults in her former employment.<sup>376</sup>

In July 1964 the County Clerk was contacted by a member of the public to inform him that there were allegations that children had been excessively punished. The complaints had been made by a working boy who had just left the home. The details of the offences were subsequently identified as follows:

T (13 years) - hit on face and strapped on bottom and legs, causing bruising, by M; strapped on bottom and hit with shoe, sometimes on head and sometimes on back by P for bed wetting.

U (6 years) - smacked almost daily by M for being difficult about food; kept sometimes an hour at table in an attempt to make her eat food.

V (11 years) - struck by R on face and head because he dropped bread on the dining room floor, and at other times because he was crying.

W (8 years) - strapped on face and bare bottom by M and smacked on face by P frequently.

X (13 years) - kicked between legs; head put under tap for wetting bed; strapped on legs and slapped on face, all day by P who also tried unsuccessfully to put a baby's napkin on him. M strapped him 20 times while R held him.

Y (9 years) - hit on face and belted on back of neck and bottom by R for bed wetting; striped on face and bottom by M; strapped by R.

Z (7 months) - hit on face by P, leaving a mark nearly 3 inch long which remained for several days. M had said anyone remarking on the mark should be told it had been caused by the cot bars.

None of these children was known to have a mental or physical disability. The infant Z, however, came within the category of children prohibited by the Children's Committee from receiving corporal punishment.<sup>377</sup>

A number of witnesses who gave evidence to the subsequent inquiry also alleged that M often hit children on the face at the table, smacked the babies on their

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<sup>376</sup> Ibid., Inspection report, 1963.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid. Appendix D, Details of alleged excessive punishment, p. 50.



bottoms for crying, that R and P were in the habit of smacking children on the bottom and that the two last named used bad language in the children's hearing.

In immediate response to the initial allegations, the Children's Committee held an emergency meeting on 7 August that was followed by a special meeting of the County Council who would decide what action to take with respect to the three accused members of staff: the matron, her deputy, and another female staff member. After a full investigation the Children's Committee concluded that the three accused members of staff were 'unsuitable for the posts which they held and they were asked to submit their resignations.' The staff concerned then resigned. If they had not done so, their employment would have been terminated.

In September 1964 the SED Chief Inspector ordered an inspection of Banff children's services in response to the Clydeville affair and the inquiry conducted by the local authority. The inspector, Miss Laurie, interviewed the former matron and elicited from her the admission that children had been smacked and slapped: 'Mrs [redacted] freely referred to smacking and slapping the children as, she said, a mother would do. She seemed to think that in so doing she was adhering to the Children's Homes (Scotland) Regulations 1959.'<sup>378</sup> The Inspector also interviewed the Children's Officer who admitted that he had 'not been entirely satisfied with Mrs [redacted] care of the Home' and that when the allegations of excessive punishment had been received he had called in the Deputy County Clerk and the Medical Officer of Health to hear the complaints first hand. The Inspector, Miss Laurie, summarized her findings as follows:

M, appointed Matron in 1963, made a good first impression. She helped to improve the material standards, and although inexperienced in child care, appeared willing to seek advice and guidance which the Children Officer was ready to give. He had initially advised against her appointment because of inexperience but thereafter helped her in every way possible. M, however, found difficulty in time in accepting the flexible attitudes to children required by modern practice. Her ideas on discipline in the Home appeared to her to have been supported by the Children's Committee, interpretation of Rule 11 of the Children's Homes (Scotland) Regulations, 1959, which enabled her to strap, without specific limitations, children within a stated age group. Her use of corporal punishment tended to increase and the Children's Officer told me that a few weeks before the allegations of excessive punishment were made known

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<sup>378</sup> Ibid: Report on Banff Child Care Services, Buckie, 9 Feb 1965.



to him he had cause to warn M of this tendency. He had mentioned his action to the County Clerk. He had been reluctant to report against M to his Committee, not wishing to appear prejudiced against her. Whenever the Army Recruiting Officer, Sergeant Rose, had passed on to him the allegations of excessive punishment made by S, a youth in the Home, he had reported the matter to the County Clerk who had arranged an immediate investigation.<sup>379</sup>

The Children's Committee interpretation of the Children's Home Regulations were as follows:

Para 11: Corporal punishment:

a) (i) That Matron be empowered to administer corporal punishment. A child proving to be difficult will be referred to the Children's Officer

(ii) that the method of punishment shall be by strap. No child under the age of five and no girl over the age of eleven shall be punished.

The Children's Officer was advised to update the guidance to staff regarding the imposition of corporal punishment but the Inspector had also been informed on her visit to the home that corporal punishment here had now been abandoned and 'the County Clerk and the Children's Officer are confident that so long as this new matron...is in charge, there will be no possibility of it being reintroduced.'<sup>380</sup> When the inspectorate visited Clydeville again on a regular inspection visit in September 1964 they were happy with what they found.

The home is running satisfactorily. The children are well cared for by an interested and efficient staff, all of whom are qualified by experience and/or training; the discipline in the home is kindly; the staff are averse to the use of corporal punishment.<sup>381</sup>

And again in 1965 a brief positive report was received that required no action on the part of the Chief Inspector.<sup>382</sup>

The Clydeville case offers a good insight into how the various authorities responsible for inspection—and ultimately for children's wellbeing and safety—worked together

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<sup>379</sup> Ibid: Report on Banff Child Care Services, Buckie, 9 Feb 1965.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., Report on Visit to Banff Children's Services, 9.2.1965.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid., Inspection report, 1964, Appendix E.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid: Inspection report, 1 June 1965.

to address a problem and implement change. Banffshire was a small local authority with only one children's home. Before the allegations at Clydeville came to light there were clearly problems with staffing and training, as there were in all local authorities, and with oversight from the Children's Committee. The punishment allegations forced the local Children's Committee, the Children's Officer, and the SED Inspectorate to work together to implement change. Through the written record of inspection visit reports and civil service minutes we can identify how the inspection system should have operated to improve standards in residential childcare.

There are two conclusions to be drawn from this example: a) the critical importance of adequate staffing—it was not until the mid-1960s that local authorities were able to begin to recruit children's home staff with relevant experience and some training; and b) the importance of a local authority determined to implement changes and responsive to criticism from the Scottish Office. Not all local authorities were willing or able to work with the Scottish Office inspectorate.

#### Summary—children's homes

The Secretary of State had the power within the 1948 Act to close a home that was not meeting standards and to compel a local authority to place these children elsewhere. Despite the poor inspection reports produced for a number of institutions there is no evidence that any were forcibly closed as a result. Of course, without clear inspection criteria available it is impossible to know how inspectors judged whether or not a home was or was not meeting standards. In some cases, homes were clearly not delivering the quality of care expected or desired and regulations were not being followed, but inspectors were conscious of the limitations (of Glasgow in particular as a local authority) and of staff. They tried to place pressure on Children's Officers to make improvements, but they were at the mercy of Children's Committees and in some cases, town councils. Most children's homes in the post-war decades were plagued by insufficient and inadequately trained staff, overcrowding, poor facilities and inadequate social care, lack of record keeping, inadequate attention to children's individual needs, and so on. Local authorities did not have the resources to make the scale of improvements required and the Scottish Office never took charge of training provision or used their power to ensure regulations were followed.

Although the jurisdictions appeared to be fairly clearly drawn with respect to responsibility for inspection of residential homes and the children cared for in them, in practice there was potential for misunderstanding and a lack of joined-up thinking

regarding the actual promotion of the overall wellbeing and protection of children in care. The SED took the view that local authorities had the major responsibility.

The inspections conducted by the SHD/SED of local authority and voluntary homes throughout this period were not child focused. Again, in the absence of inspection criteria it is difficult to know how the inspection was carried out and whether the inspectors engaged with the children. The inspection reports give little indication of this. On occasion inspectors remark on children's demeanour—whether they are 'bright' or talkative for instance—seemingly they did not seek to meet with groups of children or individuals. Neither is there any evidence that children were given the opportunity to meet with inspectors privately (this was an issue tested in the case of allegations of mistreatment at an Approved School—see Section 4.6.2). When accusations of mistreatment did come to light these occurred outwith the formal inspection regimes as we have seen in the case of St Olaf's and Clydeville and will see again in the case of Busheyhill Remand Home.

Similarly, although very many representatives of Glasgow Corporation (and likely the same was the case in other local authorities, as the Kirkaldy case study shows)—from councillors to childcare officers—visited children in residential homes, we are unable to state definitively that they spoke with the children either in groups or individually (or indeed with staff other than matrons and/or houseparents in charge) or that they asked them questions that might reveal mistreatment. Certainly, in the case of Smyllum, the Log Book indicates that local authority visitors were regular and the notes recorded therein suggest that councillors and childcare officers did meet with children or at least saw them—sometimes the children are named. But comments are generally lacking specificity. And as we have seen above, it appeared that as late as 1968 there were at least some members of Glasgow's Children's Committee who had no awareness of their responsibilities in this regard, which meant that there was ample opportunity for individual children to slip through the net. In the case of children in voluntary homes this problem was magnified on account of the relative autonomy of these institutions and their attitude to involvement by external authorities.

## **Remand Homes and Approved Schools**

These institutions which accommodated children identified as requiring detention were subject to the same inspection regime as local authority residential homes. They were inspected under the auspices of the Home Department until 1960 when the Education Department assumed responsibility.

Remand homes mainly took in children who had been apprehended by police and who were waiting an appearance in court, but they also looked after those children awaiting a place in an Approved School. As a result, there was constant turnover. Whilst in 1967 the average stay in a Remand home was 18 days, many stays were shorter.<sup>383</sup>

Remand homes were under pressure of accommodation and there had been periods of overcrowding caused by the high number of children referred by the courts and a backlog of children awaiting a place in an Approved school. In 1967 across Scotland 5,957 admissions were made during the year to nine remand homes and 'six private houses providing overnight accommodation'.<sup>384</sup> Indeed, in response to the increasing demand, the remand system was expanded in this period, including a new home opened in Edinburgh to accommodate 40 boys and 12 girls, an extension to Larchgrove in Glasgow to accommodate 25 boys at 'periods of extreme pressure', a planned replacement for Busheyhill in Lanarkshire and a planned larger home in Aberdeen to serve the north of Scotland.<sup>385</sup>

Approved schools were also under pressure of numbers. In 1967 there were 26 such establishments for children between the age of 10 and 17. Overcrowding meant that Approved schools were working under 'unremitting pressure'. Moreover it was noted that the 'difficulties facing the schools are occasioned not only by pressure of intake, but also by the high incidence of real emotional disturbance and the low intellectual capacity of many of their charges.'<sup>386</sup> Nevertheless, by this date staffing provision seems to have improved:

recruitment of suitable staff is in the main satisfactory. The schools are helped to deal with especially difficult children by visiting psychologists, whose number was increased from 4 to 5 during the year, and some improvement in psychiatric services was secured although much more assistance could be utilised.<sup>387</sup>

Remand homes and Approved schools were often challenging environments accommodating boys and girls who had already been identified as requiring care beyond that available in mainstream children's homes. It is clear from inspection reports that these institutions raised a number of concerns including overcrowding,

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<sup>383</sup> NRS, ED11/807: Social Work Services Group Annual and Periodic Reports, Child Care, 1968, p. 12.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

inadequate buildings and facilities, poorly-trained or untrained staff and the use of corporal punishment.

#### Case Study XIV: Busheyhill Remand Home

Busheyhill (sometimes known as Calder House or Cambuslang Remand home) was run by Lanarkshire local authority. Prior to 1960 it accommodated both boys and girls, but in that year Lanark began to send girls to remand homes in Glasgow. Nevertheless, this was an overcrowded home. Whilst we have not identified Scottish Office inspection reports from the period before 1960, the home was inspected regularly thereafter. In 1960 the inspectorate at the SED received a complaint from the headmaster of St John Bosco Approved School in Aberdour about the 'dirty state' of boys who arrived there from Busheyhill.<sup>388</sup> On receipt of this information the Chief Inspector was informed and the Lanark Children's Officer written to. The 1960 Inspection report does not specifically address these concerns but does identify the home as having improved in respect of fixtures and fittings, noting the provision of 'spray baths', additional sanitation facilities and a washing machine.<sup>389</sup> A year later overcrowding was still a serious problem (on some days the home accommodated 33 boys when it was supposed to hold only 18) and the home was described as 'unsatisfactory'.<sup>390</sup> The Lanark Children's Officer was visited immediately and pressed to make changes. Shortly afterwards the SED was informed that an additional member of staff was to be appointed.

Despite regular inspections, Busheyhill continued to be a cause for concern for the SED. In 1965 it was noted that additional staff had been brought in following an assault in the home when two boys attacked and overpowered one of the night staff, but none of the staff were trained to deal with the types of children placed there and the environment of the home had hardly improved. Two boys described as 'likely to cause disturbance' were locked in their room at night. The superintendent had been at this home since before the war and two other male staff were a former police officer and ex-army. 'The staff are concerned for the welfare of the boys but are not experienced in the wider field of children's work or in Remand home work in other areas.'<sup>391</sup> The superintendent assured the inspector that corporal punishment was not used in the home and staff had to sign instructions to this effect when commencing

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<sup>388</sup> NRS, ED15/468: Remand Homes: Inspectors' Reports—Lanark, Calder House 1960-66.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid: Inspection Report, 1960 (3 Aug 1960).

<sup>390</sup> Ibid: Inspection Report, 1961 (20 Dec 1961).

<sup>391</sup> Ibid., Inspection Report, 1965.

employment.<sup>392</sup> The inspectors were back in 1966 remarking on the environment as 'drab, depressing and very scanty'. The staff 'were not impressive and in need of training'. Whilst 'no official action' was recommended by the inspector, points were raised with the Children's Officer, the Children's Committee and the Joint Remand Home Committee with respect to making improvements in the physical environment and the boys educational and recreation experiences.<sup>393</sup>

The inspection regime in the case of Busheyhill Remand Home was largely ineffective in the short term. Despite almost annual inspections (and indeed regular visits from the Lanarkshire Remand Home Committee as well as individual council members—we have not attempted to locate records of these visits) the institution remained uninspiring, drab, and staffed by untrained men who lacked the resources and capacity to do more than provide a very basic service. However, in 1967 one member of staff was seconded for training at Langside College Residential Social Work Course and a new remand home was being built to be in operation by 1969. There is no suggestion of abuse or mistreatment of boys at this home. Indeed, as noted above, corporal punishment was not permitted. But there is a suggestion that the boys might have been treated with more dignity. One of the recommendations following the 1966 report was that boys be provided with small bedside tables so they no longer folded their clothes and left them outside the door each night—a small thing but significant in the context of a home which lacked many basic comforts and children who likely required additional support.<sup>394</sup>

#### Case Study XV: Wellington Farm (Approved School)

Wellington Farm School was an Approved School in Penicuik which, it is clear from the written record, had serious problems with boys absconding. Whilst the first available inspection report by the HMI dates from 1959 it is evident the school was experiencing problems before this date. In the 1959 report the inspector notes the following:

Interview by Mr Arbuckle of boy who appeared at St Andrews House to make complaints against the HM (Headmaster). It is doubtful whether the troubles at this school would have been brought to light as they were had Mr Arbuckle,

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<sup>392</sup> Ibid., Inspection Report, 1965.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid., Inspection Report, 1966.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid., Inspection Report, 1966.



without hearing the lad's complaint, sent him away and told him to report to the managers.<sup>395</sup>

The headmaster of Wellington Farm, a former brigadier, had instituted a punishment system he called 'the Track' to deal with absconders. It is likely that it was this that had taken the boy to St Andrews House. Upon visiting Wellington Farm School the Inspector discovered that there had been considerable absconding and asked to interview the boys privately in order to check that there were 'no unusual circumstances' that might be the cause.<sup>396</sup> In the course of his visit the inspector discovered that this unusual punishment system, although no longer implemented in the extreme form that had for a time been practiced,<sup>397</sup> was still in use in a revised fashion, but he also unintentionally set off a debate between the SED and Wellington managers as to whether school inspectors were entitled to speak privately to pupils without the presence of a school manager or teacher. It is evident that the inspector and the SED were of the view that incidences of mistreatment and bad management were more likely to come to light if pupils were able to speak alone with inspectors and it was possible that they had misgivings about this school in particular, especially when they became aware of the punishment regime:

There still exists at Wellington a punishment called 'The Track'. It will be remembered that Mr Innes, who was finally dismissed by the managers, put defaulters 'on the Track' after lunch. This consisted of doubling round the yard until, in some cases, the boys were ready to drop and some did. While the name persists, the 'Track' is now a more innocuous form of punishment...<sup>398</sup>

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When a boy is placed on the Track—during all break periods throughout the day the following rules must be observed:

- a) He may not smoke.
- b) He may not eat confectionary.

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<sup>395</sup> NRS, ED11/175: Approved Schools Inspection (Wellington Farm School) 27 March 1959, p. 7.

<sup>396</sup> NRS, ED11/175: Approved Schools: Inspection—Interviewing of Pupils 1959, p. 1.

<sup>397</sup> NRS, ED11/175: Approved Schools Inspection (Wellington Farm School) 27 March 1959, Minute of Inspection Visit, p. 1.

<sup>398</sup> NRS, ED11/175: Approved Schools Inspection (Wellington Farm School) 27 March 1959.

- c) He may not talk to boys who are not on the Track.
- d) He will miss one canteen issue of cigarettes for each offence.
- e) He will stand easy on the line.
- f) He will stand to attention when the rest of the boys are 'sitting up'.
- g) He will be last for supper and for any "extras".
- h) He will not come to the Office for cigarettes at 3pm
- i) He will report to the office at 3pm and report the circumstances under which he has been placed on the Track and for how long.<sup>399</sup>

Additional punishments at this school included corporal punishments 'on the buttocks over trousers, either three, four, five or six strokes', and absconders were given the task of 'scrubbing' the large hall repeatedly, despite the floor being clean.

The Inspector's view was that:

while segregation in a line after meals to distinguish between those allowed to smoke and those on default was reasonable enough, the Department and outside opinion might not favour the boys standing in a line for 10 to 20 minutes after a meal. This was a form of punishment not prescribed in the Regulations.<sup>400</sup>

Moreover, he 'discovered a considerable amount of grievance amongst the boys interviewed. They seemed resentful of the whole atmosphere of the school and in particular about 'the track' and the scrubbing.'<sup>401</sup> Whilst accepting that punishments at Wellington had been moderated—the previous regime had required boys to darn socks, only to cut fresh holes for further darning—the view of the inspector was that 'punishments for absconding were so extensive as to perhaps defeat their end.'<sup>402</sup>

Yet the school's management resisted any change to the punishment regime. Moreover, the chair of the School's managers clearly felt that SED interference in the running of the school had been facilitated by the inspector being permitted to speak with boys privately. This was no longer to be allowed by the school, and inspectors

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<sup>399</sup> Ibid., List of Punishments given to absconders, 12 Feb. 1959.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., Inspector's minute of visit, 27 March 1959, p. 1.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

would only be permitted to interview pupils in the presence of the headmaster or his depute. The inspectorate evidently felt differently but were unable to find an explicit ruling in the existing 'care and training regulations' for Approved Schools that stated they could overrule the school's demand. The chairman of the school managers was an ex-military officer and it is evident that he was unused to being challenged. However, the inspector in question did challenge his management and this matter was then escalated within the SED and advice was even sought from the Home Office in London. At the same time, it is evident from minutes that the SED were very wary of assuming authority over Approved School managers—managers and head teachers appear to have had a great deal of autonomy. Enquiries were made about whether or not this practice of interviewing children was allowed in children's homes and in one piece of correspondence it was stated that the answer to this enquiry was that it was permissible, but not much used.<sup>403</sup>

The school managers had to give in when the Inspectorate were adamant. They tried, however, to insist on procedures that made it extremely difficult for inspectors to conduct private interviews. They insisted, for instance, that both the headmaster and a manager must be informed in advance that such an interview would take place; but it was pointed out to them that this was not a sustainable position to take (with reference to the boy who turned up at St Andrews house along with a number of other instances of complaints by children or their parents).<sup>404</sup> In the end, the school manager requested an interview with the Secretary of State in a letter on 4 March 1960.<sup>405</sup> The civil servants were made nervous by this, in case the Secretary of State was forced to give a ruling in person and that this would give rise to the managers resigning and the whole business reaching the press.<sup>406</sup> To avoid this, the SED drafted a ruling and this was put before the Secretary of State who signed this and sent it to the school; the school managers then had to bow to the inevitable and accept that they would have to allow private interviews.<sup>407</sup>

In this case the SED took a firm stand and did not give in, which suggests that they did have serious worries about this and other Approved Schools and what went on in them in respect of discipline and punishment.

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<sup>403</sup> Ibid., Draft of statement by Secretary of State re Inspection of approved schools, 1960.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid., Letter from Manager of Wellington Farm to SED, dated 4.3.1960.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid., Minute and Draft submission to ministers, 10.3.1960.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., correspondence from Secretary of State to Wellington School, dated 22.4.1960.

The problems experienced at Wellington draw attention to a wider concern within government circles at the use of punishment to maintain discipline in Approved Schools. In 1967 the SED sent a circular letter to managers of Approved Schools on the subject of discipline and the use of corporal punishment.<sup>408</sup> Although the original letter has not survived, an appendix included with the circular that has survived contains the relevant extracts from the existing rules for these schools, enacted in 1961.<sup>409</sup> It is assumed that the circular proposed some changes to the latter; it also intimated the intention to withdraw corporal punishment as a means of discipline that could be used in Approved Schools.<sup>410</sup>

The responses to the circular from headmasters and managers of approved schools in Scotland revealed a variety of practices and attitudes. Wellington Farm School rejected the notion that corporal punishment might be withdrawn altogether, noting that

there will always be instances when the use of corporal punishment would benefit the pupil. Provided the correct relationship exists between the person who uses it and the recipient, corporal punishment is appreciated by both sides as a summary method of administering justice without the long lasting effects and resentment which results from the so-called lesser punishments.<sup>411</sup>

Amongst the others the purpose of corporal punishment appears to have been open to interpretation with some seeing it as a kind of therapeutic means of training, others as straightforward punishment, especially for absconding. Some inferred that the poor calibre of staff and their inexperience encouraged the use of corporal punishment in the absence of alternative disciplinary strategies.

#### Summary: Remand Homes and Approved Schools

The furore at Wellington Farm school concerning the issue of inspectors meeting privately with children alerts us to the fact that not only was this regarded as highly unusual, but that some governors of these institutions would not have permitted this.

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<sup>408</sup> It is likely that this circular arose because of the findings of an inquiry instigated by the Home Office in England which took place following a letter sent to the Guardian on 2 March 1967 alleging ill-treatment. The inquiry examined the administration of punishment at Court Lees Approved School and its report was published in August 1967.

<sup>409</sup> NRS, ED11/563: Discipline: Replies in Response to Approved Schools Circular Letter No. 21/1967.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., Responses received from Glasgow: Mossbank and Balrossie, 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 1967.

<sup>411</sup> NRS, ED15-563, p. 2.

Any intimations of mistreatment that did reach local authorities and/or the Scottish Office emanated from outside the institutions in question, which suggests that conditions within these kinds of homes were not conducive to children making complaints or reporting incidents to visitors in this period.

List D, Remand homes and Approved Schools, by definition, housed children who had additional needs and in turn required staff who possessed the skills to manage potentially challenging environments. However, in this period many of these homes were run by ex-military men who placed the onus on discipline and who ran their institutions accordingly.

## **Inspection of Children's Departments**

The Scottish Office inspectorate also had responsibility for inspecting local authority Children's Departments. Here we examine two case studies: Glasgow—the largest local authority with by far the largest number of children in care in this period—and Motherwell and Wishaw, a much smaller local authority with smaller numbers of children in their care. We have referred elsewhere in this Report to the very particular problems facing Glasgow in the post-war decades in respect of children's services and how these impacted on the effectiveness of the Children's Department in respect of its systems and processes for ensuring the welfare of the children in its care. Having said this, as the example of a neighbouring local authority will demonstrate, there were alternative ways of doing things and in the case of Motherwell and Wishaw the appointment of a visionary Children's Officer appears to have made a substantive difference.

### **Case Study XVI: Glasgow Children's Department**

In 1965 the Child Care Inspectorate at the Scottish Office was invited in to conduct an inspection of Glasgow Children's Department at the request of the Children's Officer. Since reorganisation in the wake of the Children Act Glasgow had suffered from staff shortages, lack of suitably qualified staff, shortage of accommodation for residential care, and a seeming inability to make the changes required to meet modern childcare standards—in part down to lack of resources. Significant numbers of children were still being boarded out in the Highlands, and albeit these numbers were declining, children were rarely properly assessed on their admittance to care and, as we have seen, many establishments run by the local authority or by voluntary organisations used by Glasgow were inadequate.

Glasgow's caseload was huge and growing because of the 1963 commitment to working with families. In 1964 there were 2,262 children in care and more than 800 under supervision.<sup>412</sup> By 1967-8 the total number of children in care and under supervision had reached close to 5,000 (1,750 were categorised as 'prevention' cases). In addition, the Children's Department in that year received applications for advice, guidance, or assistance from 2,760 families involving almost 10,000 children.<sup>413</sup> It was acknowledged that only a proportion of these—those families in imminent threat of complete breakdown—received assistance. Glasgow Children's Department was still operating along the lines of an emergency service, taking children into care and finding them homes, but little beyond this.

A highly critical inspection report was produced in the summer of 1966. Whilst the calibre of many staff was praised, its key points of criticism were as follows:

*Inadequate staffing.* 58 staff were employed in the Children's Department though 17 of these were clerical staff. Staff had huge caseloads with each childcare officer responsible for between 83 and 253 children.

It is in our opinion understaffed at field level. With the present staffing complement the field staff are not able to function at a satisfactory level and we feel that too great a burden is being placed on their shoulders. Understaffing at field level has resulted in case-loads so high as to limit the degree of supervision those in the Boarding-Out Section are able to give to the children entrusted to their care and this is disturbing. For those in the Admission and Prevention Section it has led to insufficient time being spent at the enquiry for admission stage and on the prevention side to cases being dealt with at surface level only.<sup>414</sup>

The report recommended this increase to 153 staff with a significant increase in childcare officers.

*Insufficient training of staff.* there was no formal in-service training though staff did attend refresher courses and extra-mural courses.

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<sup>412</sup> GCA, Glasgow Children's Department Fifteenth Annual Report (1963-1964).

<sup>413</sup> GCA, Glasgow Children's Department Nineteenth Annual Report (1967-1968).

<sup>414</sup> NRS, ED11/669-2: Child Care Arrangements—Glasgow Children's Department Inspection Reports, Inspection 1966, p. 31. CLOSED FILE.

*Casework*: the report was damning on this count. Under the Children and Young Person's Act 1963 Children's Departments were required to view

...their function as establishing a family case-work service to families "at risk" within the community, providing advice, guidance and assistance in its own right and also to avoid the need for children having to be received into care, and to rehabilitate the family with a view to the return of the children to their parents.<sup>415</sup>

Glasgow was not doing this. Children received into care had no case work conducted, there was very little preventative work carried out and insufficient involvement by childcare officers when children were in the care system. There was no aftercare. While foster homes were judged to be good, there were lapses in statutory visiting.

The key change that was implemented following the critical report was a reorganisation of staffing. Childcare officers were now to work in teams and their caseloads defined geographically. Caseloads had been decreased from 180 (which excluded preventative cases) to 95.5 per childcare officer with the aim to reduce this to 50. Staff in-service training was introduced, which consisted of sessions led by existing staff, including the Children's Officer, and aimed primarily at trainees and newly appointed staff. This training covered topics such as 'case work', 'adoption procedure', 'selection of foster parents', reception into care and so on.<sup>416</sup> Staff were also attending a series of lectures at the University of Glasgow on social service reorganisation as the new regime under the 1968 Act was introduced. Finally, the SED inspector recommended the department make use of a booklet on 'Staff Development in Social Work' and an article 'Casework conference of September 1967', which gave details of Kent county's in-service training programme.

Given the overwhelming caseload in Glasgow this was merely a stopgap measure. It was clear that Glasgow's Children's Department was failing on many fronts and required a significant increase in personnel and resources to adequately deal with the casework load, especially those children in at-risk families who required support and preventative work to prevent them coming into care. And it was equally clear that an increase in staffing was needed to work with those children already in the care system to ensure they were thriving or to return them to their parents when possible. The staff in post were committed, hard-working and (in many cases) had

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<sup>415</sup> Ibid., p. 11. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>416</sup> NRS, ED11/732: Glasgow Social Work Department: Establishment and Staffing - Report following a Meeting with SWSG, 29th January 1968.



considerable experience and training, but simply did not have the time to devote to the large number of children for whom they were responsible.

For instance, Mr Mackenzie, one of the department's boarding-out officers who had come to work for Glasgow children's services having undertaken a full time two year social services course at the University of Glasgow, was responsible for the following caseload:

Mr. MacKenzie has 26 children boarded-out with relatives in Glasgow. Ten children boarded-out in Glasgow with foster- parents. Seven children boarded outwith Glasgow with relatives, and 112 children boarded outwith Glasgow with foster-parents. He has four children in Hostels, five in private lodgings, six in residential employment. This gives a total of 170 cases under his supervision. In the last six months Mr. MacKenzie has made five enquiries regarding Care or Protection.<sup>417</sup>

Furthermore, this caseload caused Mr Makenzie some frustration:

Mr. MacKenzie is a capable Child Care Officer with a mature and enthusiastic approach to his work. He has the right approach to case-work, but feels that pressure of work does not allow him to deal with his cases at an adequate case-work level. My interview with him was interrupted by numerous telephone calls, and on four occasions to deal with people who had called at the office to see him. He dealt with these interruptions calmly and efficiently. The heavy workload carried by Mr. MacKenzie tends to inhibit his professional development as a case-worker; this is a matter of concern to him.<sup>418</sup>

Indeed, the appendices to the report contain detailed case studies of a number of childcare officers which clearly illustrate their heavy caseloads and their frustration at not being able to spend sufficient time on each child's particular needs. It was admitted that children were taken into care sometime unnecessarily and kept in care for too long. Prevention work was limited to debt collecting—that is, arranging for rent arrears to be paid on behalf of families to avoid them being evicted and their children taken into care.

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<sup>417</sup> NRS, ED11/669/2, Inspection Report, p. 98. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid.

The Inspection report's profile of a childcare officer in the admission and prevention section, Mr Brownlie, describes both the caseload a typical Glasgow officer had to deal with and the nature of that work. It is worth reproducing it here in full:

a) Admissions

(i) He admitted 199 children from family breakdown cases into residential care in 1965, six truancy cases, and six care and protection cases. He has no statistics of the number of applications he dealt with who did not go into care. He says that only on very rare occasions is he able to investigate applications for admission other than at the time of the application at the office and says many children go into care unnecessarily because of this. Some applicants have to be refused admission due to shortage of beds. He says that he has no contact with Homes after a child is admitted. He has no contact with families either, with a view to the children returning home, except when parents call at the office and he contends that many children remain in care unnecessarily. Action about children returning home is taken by Mr. McLeish at the Homes with the matron and child; no-one is in contact with the parents. He would investigate applicants fully and help parents get their children home if he had time. He completes a Family Case Paper when a child is admitted to a Home and all other relevant forms. Night, weekend and holiday admissions of family breakdown cases are he thinks more numerous than admissions in office hours. These he says do involve investigation after admission as the information available is so scanty. He visits parents whom have gone to prison and makes enquiries of relatives to take the children and often offers the boarding-out allowance as an inducement. He tends to keep obvious short-term children thus boarded-out himself, but others he passes details over to the appropriate boarding-out Child Care Officer for the district concerned. Every effort is made to get these boarded-out children out of care as quickly as possible.

(ii) Discharge, After-Care and Supervision Cases

When children are returned home he is unable to give any form of supervision but occasionally will ask other agencies to keep an eye on the family. This is especially so in RSSPCC cases. Children, the subject of a supervision order for truancy and care of protection, are legally supervised returning home. Mr. Brownlie has 23 cases at present.

(iii) Court Work Mr Brownlie prepares Home Reports in care or protection cases; reformatory children, and committed children beyond control in Homes, and attends the Juvenile Court. He also attends the Juvenile Court when a Probation Officer indicates the possibility of the child being committed to the local authority for offences. There is good liaison here he says. He attends Court in truancy cases brought by the education department and when children are brought by parents as outwith their control. In these cases he will express an opinion as to disposal. He estimates he attends Court on an average of one day a week.

(b) Prevention

Mr. Brownlie offered the opinion that the 1948 Children Act was not now being implemented properly due to the wrong emphasis being placed on Section 1 of the 1963 Act. He said the prevention of children deprived of home life from coming into care was not being carried out due to lack of full investigation, that children were kept in care unnecessarily as no work was done with their families to get them out of care, and that help to families and supervision of children on discharge was not done. In 1965 Mr. Brownlie dealt with 222 families involving 916 children and is currently dealing with 108 families involving 500 children arising from the 1963 Act. All these cases, however, are related to rent arrears or non-payment of gas and electricity accounts. He considers the Act is being exploited by the City Housing Factors, private housing factors, and the Gas and Electricity Boards. He and his colleagues are being used to do the most sordid part of debt collecting for these concerns. He feels many of these families, even if not helped by him, would still not entail their children coming into care. He considers the population are looking more and more on the Children's Department as money-lenders and a supplementary N.A.B. He considers the Children's Department is being exploited. The pressing and important work of keeping children of family breakdowns out of care, doing family case- work with the families while children are in care, and giving help and guidance to families after children come out of care goes by the board in order to collect debts.<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> NRS, ED11/669-2 Child care arrangements. Appendix B (ii), pp. 51-2. CLOSED FILE.

And as children's case files reveal, for many children on coming into care in Glasgow, they were never properly assessed and were moved from pillar to post until discharge.

The inspection report on Glasgow's Children's Services did not explicitly raise concerns about any danger to children's wellbeing or safety as a result of the staff shortages and the limitations of the work they were able to undertake. But the case of [REDACTED] who was very badly abused by a foster carer (see Section 4.4.3) and the troubles at one of Glasgow's children's homes (Gryffe) confirmed that this was a local authority with serious challenges.

In 1967 allegations were made regarding 'excessive punishment' of boys at Gryffe home. It was alleged by several boys who had left the home that 'boys were beaten on the buttocks and legs until they were red and bruised'; 'cold baths had been ordered as special punishment', 'boys were made to run at the double in hobnailed boots for long periods', 'boys were made to run on the spot and were being hit by a bigger boy who was given this duty as a "task"' as well as 'periods of enforced silence'.<sup>420</sup>

The home had been visited by SED inspectors just two years earlier in 1965 who concluded:

This Home is running well. The care of over fifty boys in a home run as one large family necessitates a certain amount of regimentation and institutionalism. This however tends to be offset by the personalities of Mr and Mrs [X] who show ability and aptitude to provide a congenial atmosphere for these boys, many of whom have presented behaviour problems in the past.<sup>421</sup>

By the time the Scottish Office Inspectors were undertaking their full and thorough inspection of the Glasgow Children's Department a year or so later following the allegations of 'harsh and unusual forms of punishment', they adopted a more sceptical view of this home. Pencil annotations (presumably undertaken by someone in the SED on the Glasgow inspection team) on the pages of the Gryffe Inspection report (included in the appendices of the Report into Glasgow Children's Department), indicates a different view of what was going on in this home.

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<sup>420</sup> NRS, ED11/698: Conviction of Foster Parents of a Boarded-out Boy [REDACTED] - Report by Special Sub-committee of Children's Committee on Gryffe Children's Home, 27 Nov 1967.

<sup>421</sup> NRS, ED11/669-2, p. 316. CLOSED FILE.

For instance, where the 1965 Inspection report commented that 'Mr [X] exercises effective control over the boys. He uses occasional corporal punishment for stealing, swearing or fighting'; the pencil annotation comments: 'Nothing about whacking boys in the corridors or the successive punishment reported by Mrs [Y]?'<sup>422</sup>

The problems at Gryffe Home could be traced to a number of causes: overcrowding, a concentration of boys with troubled backgrounds, its remote location from Glasgow (Gryffe was in the vicinity of Quarrier's in Lanarkshire), the inexperience of the houseparents and a widespread acceptance that some corporal punishment was necessary. At a meeting in 1968 between the SWSG (now responsible for inspections) and a sub-committee of the Glasgow Corporation Children's Committee established to discuss the matters arising out of the Child Care Inspectorate's inspection of Children's services, it was noted that the houseparent at Gryffe would no longer be strapping boys on the buttocks and would be limiting corporal punishment to their hands.<sup>423</sup> But there was no appetite to abolish corporal punishment immediately and outright and neither was there any desire to move the houseparents. 'The Committee said they had given consideration to this but had decided that with all their inexperience Mr and Mrs [X] had tried to do a good job.'<sup>424</sup> In fact the boys themselves were indirectly blamed—'the size of the home together with the behaviour problems associated with certain types of boys who were admitted created difficulties.'<sup>425</sup> Accompanying the report was a classification of the boys in Gryffe: of 51 altogether, 21 had been returned from boarding out with reasons cited as 'behaviour problems' (8 boys), behaviour problems and stealing (2), stealing (4) and the rest described under the headings of stealing and truancy, truancy, bedwetting and soiling, death of foster parents, and did not settle with relatives.<sup>426</sup>

The outcome of this investigation was that the houseparents kept their jobs—the investigating sub-committee tended to believe the accounts of the staff and the boys who had not made the complaints—and recommendations were made regarding the use of corporal and other kinds of punishment.<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> Ibid., p. 314.

<sup>423</sup> NRS, ED 11/731-2: SWSG meeting 26 Jan 1968. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid.

<sup>425</sup> NRS, ED11/698: Report by Special Sub-committee of Children's Committee on Gryffe Children's Home, 27 Nov 1967, p. 6.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., Appendix - classification of reasons why in care.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid., Report by Special Sub-committee, p. 6.



Whether or not the allegations at Gryffe were exaggerated or not, it is clear from this case (and that of [REDACTED] who had been mistreated in foster care and was subsequently placed in Gryffe) that there were real doubts as to whether Glasgow children's services were effectively carrying out their duties to children in the period.

#### Case Study XVII: Motherwell and Wishaw

It is perhaps disingenuous to compare Glasgow with some of the smaller local authorities in Scotland, but the example of Motherwell and Wishaw, in close proximity to the city of Glasgow with a not dissimilar profile—industrial, large working-class population and large community of Irish Catholic immigrants—albeit with many fewer children in care, does highlight areas where other local authorities were making progress.

In 1954, Motherwell and Wishaw was responsible for 94 children, half of whom were boarded out. The SHD Inspection for that year remarked upon the paucity of detailed records for individual children, but it was noted that the Children's Officer 'takes a personal interest in all the children and knows a great deal about all of them, not all of which is recorded.'<sup>428</sup> Shortly thereafter a new Children's Officer was appointed, Miss Turner, who was committed to prevention and dramatically reduced the number of children in care by a third—primarily by returning children to relatives, closing a residential home, removing all of the children who had been in Smyllum from that institution, and endeavouring to place hard to place children in foster care with working class families in the area. It was clear that Miss Turner was highly committed to all of the children in her care, visited them regularly and was willing to argue for increased resources and particularly more staff to operate a more effective prevention policy (which she identified as being far more than merely fighting evictions).<sup>429</sup> The contrast with the situation in Glasgow was stark. Each child was given individual attention with efforts made to find the most appropriate home for him or her.

By 1967 Miss Turner was still in charge and had enlarged her team who were successfully addressing the prevention agenda. Details of all the children dealt with by the Children's Department in June and July 1967 indicate that the majority were offered what might be described as temporary respite care at the West Kilbride

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<sup>428</sup> NRS, ED11/459: Child Care Arrangements in Motherwell and Wishaw, Inspectors' Reports, 1954-1968.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid., 1965 report.



Children's Holiday Camp or with known foster carers in Banff, before being returned to their family. Presumably in the meantime, efforts had been made to stabilise the family situation so the children might be returned. In addition the Department dealt with 1,156 enquiries in those two months and extensive prevention work was undertaken including liaising with numerous other agencies including the police, house factors, the Ministry of Social Security, and neighbours to avert the children being taken into care for any longer than was necessary. Sometimes this involved supplying loans to avert eviction. This was immensely time-consuming case work. The case of 'Family P' was typical:

Mother of family of eight children taken into hospital for birth of ninth child. Father in prison—electricity in danger of being disconnected due to non payment of account.

Sources contacted during investigation: Hospital almoner; Relatives; Prison welfare officer, SSEB [electricity supplier]

Action taken: Contacted relatives to look after children while mother in hospital. Mother visited in hospital and reassured about family. Prison welfare officer contacted to advise of family situation. SSEB contacted re extension—this refused as extension already granted. Loan to pay account given by this Department.

Further action: Mother discharged from hospital. Father discharged from prison. Employer contacted and employment resumed. Two eldest boys sent for holiday at Holiday Camp. Close contact will be retained with this family and electricity loan is being repaid.

Time expended: working hours 6; non working hours 4.<sup>430</sup>

By 1967 prevention work was at the core of Motherwell and Wishaw's practice as the Inspection report explained:

With the development of preventative work Miss Turner finds that in most cases assessment can be made before the children come into care, the family having been known to her for some considerable time. Placement with suitable relatives is always sought but Miss Turner has several temporary foster mothers who are willing to care for the children...Most children are seen by the child guidance

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid., Inspection Report, 1967: Appendix F.

Service. Fostering is extensively practiced and intensive public relations work has enabled the Children's Officer to develop this aspect of her work.<sup>431</sup>

By this time Motherwell only had two children in residential care, such were the efforts to prevent children coming into care in the first place and then to place them in foster care. The contrast with Glasgow is stark where, even by the late 1960s, children's homes were still overcrowded as we have seen, Smyllum and other Catholic homes were still being used extensively for the city's Catholic children and hundreds of children were still boarded out, very many of them at some considerable distance from the city.

#### Summary: inspection of children's departments

The inspections of local authority Children's Departments exposed failings in some and highlighted the successes of others (albeit we have only looked at a very limited sample) demonstrating that with the right staff and a different attitude the preventive approach could be successfully implemented though sufficient resources were key. It was to take the Social Work Act 1968 to bring about a fundamental shift in the way in which Glasgow managed its services to children requiring care. This is discussed in Part II of this Report.

### Summary of Inspection 1948-1968

The question of whether the regulation and inspection regime was effective in the period between the 1948 Children Act and the 1968 Social Work Act in preventing the mistreatment and abuse of children must be answered in the negative from the examples cited here.

The inspection regime implemented by local authorities and the Scottish Office was conducted broadly in line with the regulations, but its shortcomings in respect of all areas of childcare are evident from the selected case studies. We think it unlikely that childcare officers, especially those employed by Glasgow Corporation who had very large caseloads, would have detected the mistreatment or abuse of children in both foster care and residential care. Whilst the welfare of individual children was the responsibility of local authorities evidence suggests that oversight was (at best) patchy and likely contingent on adequate financial and staffing resources. Glasgow certainly visited the children in its care placed in residential homes and in far flung

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<sup>431</sup> Ibid., Inspection Report, 1967 p. 20.

and closer to home foster homes, but the notes recorded on children's case files suggest visitors—and especially councillors—were content merely seeing the children.

Before 1960 Scottish Office inspectors seemingly took a broad-brush approach to the material provision of care; after that date inspections paid more attention to provision for children to develop socially and as individuals but the surviving record indicates a general willingness to accept conditions in homes that were far from ideal for children who often had complex physical and emotional needs. It was not within the remit of the Scottish office inspectorate to inspect the wellbeing of individual children.

In the cases of institutions where mistreatment was alleged, the intimations originated elsewhere and not from official visitors, either from the Scottish Office or local authorities. Residential care was, as we have said repeatedly, poorly staffed in this period. Staff took on the management of children's homes with little experience and next to no training in many cases. There was still a legacy of housefathers and matrons left over from the pre-war era. And as the case of Wellington Farm School illustrates, the issue of inspectors meeting privately with children was a point of contention, suggesting that this was not a usual feature of inspection visits.

The regulation of foster care was similarly light touch with little evidence of foster parents being vetted and, in the case of Glasgow at least, a familiar relationship between childcare officers and guardians that left children potentially exposed to mistreatment. Whilst the Scottish office was unhappy about the numbers of children Glasgow had boarded out in remote areas it was unable to effect change overnight, and children were still being sent to the Highlands and Islands in the 1970s.

Following the 1968 Act children's homes were placed largely under the aegis of local authorities; Scottish Office responsibility for inspection was greatly reduced. Whilst this new management and regulatory regime was simpler, avoiding the conflicts that arose between local authorities and the Scottish Office inspectorate, the new system potentially created holes in the regulation of these institutions and it is very difficult to identify in the historical record precisely how and when residential homes were inspected by local authorities from this date.

The great organisational change that was made in 1948 with the introduction of separate Children's Departments did not necessarily usher in hoped-for changes in practice. The new Departments had to deal with the legacy of pre-war policies,

structures and ways of doing things and—in Glasgow at least—insufficient resources to implement change that would positively impact on the welfare and safety of all children brought to their attention. Moreover, the continued existence of large voluntary-run children’s homes that were out of step with modern childcare thinking, and the slow response to the practice of boarding out in remote areas, meant that many children were allocated care placements that were far from ideal. Legislation and regulation thus failed to ensure that all deprived children were given every opportunity to thrive—for some, the opposite could be true.

# The Children and Young Person's Act 1963 and the run up to the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968

## Social work and prevention

The 1963 Act was instrumental in promoting preventive work as a central plank of childcare policy in the UK. Whilst the 1948 Act had charged local authorities with intervening in families where children were at risk by removing them to substitute homes, now there was a greater emphasis on assisting such families and preventing children from coming into care in the first place:

Under Section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 local authorities have a duty to make available such advice, guidance and assistance as may promote the welfare of children by diminishing the need to receive them into or keep them in care or to bring them before the court. This preventive aspect of child care work has developed steadily and now forms an important function of local authorities.<sup>432</sup>

In practice this meant there had to be much greater cooperation between local authority departments, particularly housing, other state welfare provision in health, education and national assistance, and external agencies such as the RSSPCC. Prevention was a more complex and likely time-consuming way of managing children's welfare for field workers operating from Children's Departments. However, some Scottish local authorities were fully supportive of this ambition. In a report addressed to the Secretary of State in 1964, Renfrewshire's Children's Department, made the following comments:

...when the provisions of the Act became law in October 1963, the County Council already had in its various departments the machinery necessary to operate the functions laid down...The County Council having regard to the steady increase in the number of problem families requiring to be supervised authorised provision for a staff of three Family Care Officers. These have been recruited. The County Council noted at that time that approximately 160 problem families were being dealt with by the Children's Department.<sup>433</sup>

The report continues by outlining the liaison undertaken with housing departments in the county's major towns, with health and welfare agencies, voluntary agencies

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<sup>432</sup> H. Hendrick, *Child Welfare, England 1872-1989* (London, 1994), p. 227.

<sup>433</sup> GCA CH/4 (ii): County Council of Renfrew: Reports to the Secretary of State; Draft of 'Children and Young Persons' Act, 1963: Report to the Secretary of State', p. 1.

and even with large employers in the area, to address the issues raised by problem families. Renfrewshire had also set up a 'Family Advice Centre' in Linwood, open two afternoons and one evening per week. Referrals to this 'clinic' could be made by any 'Social Work, Medical, Religious and Voluntary agencies operating in Linwood'; potential 'clients' could also self-refer. However, the report makes clear that there might be difficulty rolling this out across a large and populous county. The employment of a team of 'family aides' to give practical assistance was also in planning, starting with two aides to work in the Linwood district.<sup>434</sup> The report shows that in the year 1963-1964, 211 families had been referred for assistance, involving 922 children; of the 211 families, 112 had been referred by housing authorities. The results of such preventive work were that 866 children had remained with their families and were not committed to care, the remainder had to be taken into some form of care.<sup>435</sup> In Renfrewshire, prevention quickly became the main means of dealing with children at risk. Nevertheless, this county was almost certainly ahead of the trend and cannot be viewed as an exemplar for what happened everywhere in Scotland.

In Glasgow, between 1963 and 1968, the challenges involved were on a much larger scale. As we have seen, during much of the 1960s, prevention was very much the poor relation in terms of being a model for dealing with children already in the care system, or newly brought to its attention. As we have noted in section 4, in Scotland's largest city, the balance between the number of children in residential or foster care and those 'under supervision' was still tipped towards those in care. As this kind of preventive work increased, childcare officers were spending much of their time dealing with the housing department to prevent evictions or to obtain new accommodation for a family, obtaining various items of furniture and household goods to enable families to properly care for their children, as well as liaising with utility providers, debt collectors, and similar. However, the rushed manner of much preventive work precluded overburdened and under-resourced childcare officers

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4; it should be noted that the RSSPCC also provided this kind of domestic assistance and had for many years employed female home visitors who assisted families in trouble to improve their domestic environments in ways that aimed to protect children's welfare: information about the work of these women is available within the archive of Children 1<sup>st</sup>. The authors have not consulted the archive for this report but are familiar with it from previous research. See Abrams and Fleming, 'Isolated and dependent: women and children in high-rise social housing in post-war Glasgow', *Women's History Review* 28:5 (2019), pp. 794-813.

<sup>435</sup> GCA CH/4 (ii): County Council of Renfrew: Reports to the Secretary of State; Draft of 'Children and Young Persons' Act, 1963: Report to the Secretary of State', p. 5.



properly investigating all family circumstances. Later case studies explored in this report will demonstrate that this was a problem that potentially carried very significant risks for children.

The 1963 Act has been described as 'a substantial springboard for the next leap and a major milestone in child care'.<sup>436</sup> Yet although the period from c.1963 to the introduction of the 1968 Social Work Act saw some significant changes in the ways children requiring intervention were managed, these were unevenly experienced across the country. In Scotland as a whole there were 10,642 children in care on 30 November 1968, but this overall number concealed the movement of receptions and discharges. Some 6,927 children were received into care and 6,924 were discharged, the majority to be returned to parents and relatives.<sup>437</sup> Although this marked a dramatic change since the 1940s and 50s (when perhaps the majority of children who were taken into care stayed there long-term) these figures also alert us to the increased volume of work created by such a turnover. This meant that the work of local authorities was more complex at a time when staffing was still inadequate. In the same year, this mammoth task was being performed in Scotland by a total of '53 children's officers and 228 full-time and 24 part-time other field staff'.<sup>438</sup>

## Training

Central to most of the problems encountered since 1948 in Scotland was the low level of education and training opportunities available to childcare workers. Greater efforts to address this issue took place in the 1960s. A Central Training Council for England and Wales had been in place since 1947, but no such provision was made in Scotland ahead of the enactment of the Children Act. It has been commented that in Scotland the steps taken to provide training were 'too little, too late'.<sup>439</sup> In 1960, there were fewer than 20 trained childcare staff in Scottish local authorities'.<sup>440</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, those working in childcare, or who had the ambition to do so, had to travel to England for accredited training and it was noted by the Scottish Office that this often meant they did not return—salaries and career prospects simply

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<sup>436</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services* p. 93.

<sup>437</sup> Social Work Services Group, *Child Care in Scotland, 1968 (Including Remand Homes and Approved Schools): A Report of the Secretary of State for Scotland*, Cmnd. 4069 (HSMO, Edinburgh 1969), p. 10.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>439</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services*, p. 106.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106-7.

outstripped that which was on offer north of the border.<sup>441</sup> Training provided for local authority field officers consisted only of central government sponsored 'refresher courses'. Where training for residential work was concerned, some courses were initiated, but the cost of these were met by both central and local government.<sup>442</sup> The reports of sub-committees of the Scottish Advisory Council on Childcare issued in 1950 included one specifically on training, but it is almost certain this was never published as the Home Department decided that it would have 'restricted public interest'.<sup>443</sup> It is clear from Home Department commentary on it that they judged some of the report's recommendations as unrealisable. The Committee on Training had recommended that a course be set up for boarding-out officers. The decision taken on this by the Scottish Office was that the number of boarding-out officers' posts 'likely to be offered by local authorities in Scotland in the next five years may be as few as eight, and probably not more than 12'; further commentary on the subject notes that:

...it would be unfair to set up a training course, to which considerable numbers of young persons might be attracted, when there would be so little prospect of employment in Scotland. Local authorities would be under no obligation to employ only persons who had completed the course...That there would probably be objection by the local authorities to paying half the cost of training of students who had to find employment outside of Scotland...The views expressed by the Committee as to the high academic qualifications to be expected of boarding-out officers...the long period of practical experience (5 to 7 years) before a boarding -out officer would be eligible for appointment as a children's officer [are] quite unrealistic in relation to the actual situation, the prospect of boarding-out officers obtaining higher posts and the comparatively poor remuneration likely to be offered by local authorities in Scotland. <sup>444</sup>

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<sup>441</sup> NRS, ED11/426: Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care: Submission of Reports of Committees on Boarding-Out, After-Care & Homes: Note on Report of the Training Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care', 1950.

<sup>442</sup> See for example, NRS, ED11/379: Homeless Children: Financial Provisions for Training and Grants to Voluntary Homes Consultation with Local Authority; minutes of a meeting held on 6th February 1952.

<sup>443</sup> NRS, ED11/426: Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care: Submission of Reports of Committees on Boarding-Out, After-Care & Homes; 'Note on Report of the Training Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care', item. 7. Four reports were prepared, one each on: boarding out; residential care; after care and training—the first three of these were published in 1950. A copy of the report prepared by the Committee on Training has not been recovered, but this government file contains commentary and correspondence on its content.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., items 2, 3 & 7.

Thus, training facilities for field officers in Scotland did not progress because of the conceit of 'the long experience of local authorities in Scotland in the boarding-out of children.'<sup>445</sup> What this belief failed to grasp was that 'long experience' was no guarantee that such staff would be sufficiently knowledgeable and able to take forward the changes proposed to improve childcare.

Any remedy to this situation had to wait until 1964 when, 'after a quiescent period', the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care's Training Committee spent much time assessing provision and take up of training in Scotland.<sup>446</sup> A proposal for a Scottish College of Social Work was mooted in order to address the problems of 'recruitment, education and training of social workers.'<sup>447</sup> So poor was provision of training that social workers were having to 'take what comes along' including nursery-nurse training. The courses that did exist were fragmented; there was no generic course and no training authorities or training establishments responsible for this kind of provision.<sup>448</sup>

A survey of the qualifications of all the children's officers, their deputies, and childcare officers in Scotland in 1964 revealed a varied picture. Whilst the majority possessed a diploma or certificate in some branch of social work or social science, a good number did not, including seven of Glasgow's childcare officers.<sup>449</sup> In some local authorities none of the officers had qualifications.<sup>450</sup> The problems of recruitment and training were interlinked. There was not sufficient training capacity in Scotland—the University courses only produced trained social workers in single figures each year—and recruitment needs far exceeded this.<sup>451</sup>

The nature of training for different areas of childcare work was also a running issue that became worse over the years. Records reveal that 'Children's Departments and childcare staff were not accorded a high status within local authorities' and this was reflected in the poor remuneration provided compared, for example, with teachers.<sup>452</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> Ibid., item 5.

<sup>446</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services*, p. 100.

<sup>447</sup> NRS, ED11/756 SAC (T) 64 23, 'The value of grouping courses of training for social work' p. 1.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid p. 2.

<sup>449</sup> NRS, ED11/756 SAC(T) (65) 6: Qualifications and salaries of children's department staff, 31 Dec 1964.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

<sup>451</sup> NRS, ED11/756 SAC (T) (64) 7: Child care officers—number required and possible sources of recruitment, 1964.

<sup>452</sup> NRS, ED11/648: Working Party on Staffing of Children's Departments—Minutes of Meetings (December 1962-April 1963); quotation from minutes of a meeting held on 15th February 1963. For

Residential childcare workers had even lower status than those employed in field work and salaries among these workers varied enormously. We do not know, unfortunately, the uptake of courses for residential houseparents from the point when this was begun in the early 1950s. In the mid-1960s houseparent courses were run in Glasgow (Langside College) and in Aberdeen but there clearly was a need to roll these out to other parts of the country and expand provision in the central belt in order to allow unqualified staff already in post to undertake formal training. A survey of applications for houseparents' courses from 1962-3 to 1965-6 reveals the painfully slow development of making this type of work a career that required qualifications. In 1963 only 19 applicants were accepted onto this course and even after the efforts of the Training Committee, this number had only risen to 35 by 1966.<sup>453</sup> In 1967, for the one-year residential care training provided at Langside, Glasgow Corporation were prepared to sponsor:

...not more than two members of the staff be seconded with pay for attendance at the course with a view to obtaining the Certificate in Child Care, awarded by the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care, subject to an undertaking being given by the employees concerned that they would remain in the service of the Corporation for a period of at least three years after completion of the course.<sup>454</sup>

Glasgow childcare workers' take up of training appeared to be rather limited. In the critical inspection of the Children's Department in 1966 it was remarked that:

In-service Training: There is no formal scheme of in-service training for the staff but Miss Hamilton, who has responsibility in this field, is able to accomplish much on an informal basis through informal discussion with all field staff and by making herself available for consultation. She has the support of the Children's Officer and it is only through having insufficient time that a more formal in-service training scheme is not in operation...The Glasgow Children's Department has made full use of the refresher courses organised and run by the Department

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examples of salary scales in Glasgow mid-1960s, see GCA Ref: D-TC17/1/19 & D-TC17/1/20: The Corporation of Glasgow: Return of Staff as at 1st September, 1965 [and 1966] p. 13 in both examples.

<sup>453</sup> NRS, ED11/756: Scottish Advisory Committee on Child Care—Training Committee Papers; appendix to SAC(T) (65)12: Note by Secretary of the Scottish Advisory Council Committee on Training, dated 16/9/1965.

<sup>454</sup> GCA Minutes of the Corporation of Glasgow, Vol.: C1/3/153, 'Meeting of Children Committee held 18th October 1966' (pp. 1205-6). Of note for this entry is that the Langside course running that year had been expanded to include training relevant to staff working in remand homes, so the figure of two members of staff is particularly dismal given that Glasgow had, in addition to numerous children's homes, a remand home. This decision would also have had to be approved by the Establishments Committee who were not known for their generosity with financing the work of the Children's Committee.

and Miss Hamilton has encouraged those who have attended to discuss the content of these courses and what they have gained from them with the rest of the field staff when they meet together for tea and coffee breaks. So far as residential staff are concerned Miss Hamilton makes the point of discussing the course with them. Full use is also made of the extra-mural courses held at Glasgow University and fees are paid by the Children's Department.<sup>455</sup>

From 1964 onwards, there was progress in providing training for field workers either through colleges and universities, refresher courses run by the SED, or via the kinds of in-service, informal training outlined above—though clearly this had some limitations. By then, it was possible to obtain a certificate in social work from Glasgow University and three more courses were in planning for the following year including one at Moray House in Edinburgh.<sup>456</sup> However, such progress had to close a large gap that had been allowed to grow over a 15-year period and the professional accreditation for field work training of the 'Home Office Letter of Recognition in Child Care' was still granted by an English body, regardless that courses were being run in Scotland.<sup>457</sup> An equivalent Scottish system of granting such professional credit had not yet been established.

On the eve of the Social Work Act in 1968, of the 305 officers employed within Children's Departments, only 60 had professional childcare qualifications.<sup>458</sup> The challenge of obtaining a professionally qualified workforce in Scotland meant providing courses not only for new recruits but enabling the secondment of existing officers to undertake training. Programmes also needed to attract talented educators and practical placements that were part of this vocational study depended on workplaces having sufficient qualified staff in post to support trainees. The promise held by further legislative reform depended greatly on momentum being kept up in training provision but just ahead of 1968, the possibility of this looked bleak when a

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<sup>455</sup> NRS, ED11/669/2: Glasgow Children's Department, p. 27. CLOSED FILE.

<sup>456</sup> NRS, ED11/756 SAC (T) 64 32: 'Training for social casework on local authority services', p. 1.

<sup>457</sup> This was the Central Training Council; see NRS, ED11/784: Voluntary Homes: Advisory Council on Training in Child Care; letter from Bruce Millan MP to Baroness Elliot of Harwood, undated, probably around February 1968.

<sup>458</sup> Report by a Working Party on the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, Social Work in Scotland (Edinburgh, 1969), Appendix D, 'Social Work Staff in Scotland', pp. 184-5. The working party, constituted in May 1968, was made up of personnel from the Department of Social Administration at the University of Edinburgh. It had a very short period in which to produce its report, the research for which was supported with funding from the Joseph Rowntree Trust.

proposal to start up a course at Strathclyde University that included professional accreditation was vetoed by the London-based Central Training Council.<sup>459</sup>

Shortly after the conviction of foster parents for maltreatment of the child [REDACTED] [REDACTED] discussed in Section 4, a member of the Scottish Child Care Association wrote a lengthy letter to the press about the magnitude of the problem of education and training. She asserted that in view of the recent tragic events and in advance of upcoming legislation, the training of social workers was a matter for public interest. The letter emphasised the paucity of available training in Scotland until 1964 but claimed that even after, in the year 1965-6 only two field officers were sponsored by SED to undertake university-based education in childcare. This letter goes on to state that:

Since the Children and Young Persons Act placed further extensive duties on local authorities...the difficulties of maintaining a satisfactory standard of case work in what is perhaps the most complex aspect of social work have grown steadily...My association is now concerned about a decision...not to allow such a course to be set up at Strathclyde...in the light of the forthcoming reorganisation of the social services which will call for the maintenance of trained staff of the highest calibre, such a decision is nothing short of disastrous.<sup>460</sup>

If the reforms advocated by the 1948 Act were hindered by the inheritance of practices that had gone before, where children are concerned, it might be said that the legislative reform that came along twenty years later faced a similar prospect.

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<sup>459</sup> NRS, ED11/784: letter from Bruce Millan MP to Baroness Elliot of Harwood and accompanying Scottish office minute dated 10/4/1968.

<sup>460</sup> Letter from W. Y. McNeil, Glasgow Herald 22 September 1967.



# PART II: 1969-1994

## Implementation of the Social Work Act

### **Introduction: Aims of the 1968 Reform**

Just as the 1948 Act had been responsible for separating services to deprived children from other types of welfare provision, the 1968 Social Work (Scotland) Act introduced organisational structures at local authority level that re-incorporated child welfare into the wider landscape of social services. The findings of the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) inquiry (1961-4), usually referred to as the Kilbrandon Report, that fed into the Scottish Office White Paper: *Social Work and the Community* (1966), are usually seen as being the important influences on this turn.<sup>461</sup> However, after 1948, as we have noted, there were other legislative predecessors that reflected a change in philosophy towards what worked best for children who need state intervention to protect their welfare. Unlike the Children Act, the Social Work Act was specific to Scotland, rather than a modified application of UK legislation. This seemed to promise that organisational change would be accompanied by real change in practice aimed at addressing the specific social problems in Scotland.

Underpinning much of what the Act proposed in relation to children was, firstly, the growing understanding that prevention (of a child being removed from his or her family) was for most children far preferable to removal and provision of a substitute home. Secondly, the idea that children needed to be seen within the context of their families and wider community was the predominant motivation for not consigning child welfare to separate departments. Having noted the specificity of the Act to Scotland, it is also worth mentioning that in this period, Scotland was probably in the vanguard of an international turn within social work towards the problems of 'communities'.<sup>462</sup> These two factors had a part to play in what unfolded within Scotland:

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<sup>461</sup>Children and Young Persons (Scotland), (Cmnd 2306, HMSO, 1964), the inquiry (1961-4) was chaired by Lord Kilbrandon; *Social Work and the Community* (HMSO, Edinburgh, 1966).

<sup>462</sup> For a review of this trend, though one which places no emphasis of the role played by the 1968 Act see, W. David Harrison, 'Social Work's Evolution in the United Kingdom: A Study of Community Care and Social Control', *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, Vol 90, No. 3 (2009), pp. 336-342.

Community social work was one of the profession's historical attempts to bring social work into a balance between its response to individuals and its attempt to enhance the development of the communities the individuals are bound to.<sup>463</sup>

The text of the 1966 White Paper also make clear that a great deal of what had been learned about improving welfare services generally had originated with the work done for children since 1948:

The proposal to merge the children's department into a new local authority department with much wider responsibilities will be a departure from the recommendations of the Committee on Homeless Children (the Clyde Committee) in 1946 that deprived children should be the responsibility of a separate local authority department. But there have been many developments in social work since then, and some of the most important of these have stemmed from the work done and experience gained by the children's departments set up then. At that time, the care of deprived children was seen as mainly concerned with the provision of substitute homes. In the last fifteen years increasing emphasis has been placed on efforts to prevent deprivation by securing adequate care of the child in his own home whenever that is practicable. This change of emphasis has involved child care workers to an increasing extent in work with the parents, relatives and communities to which the children belong, and the nature of this work has developed into the provision of guidance and support for a wide range of people who are in emotional or social difficulty. Largely from this experience has grown the recognition that this kind of support and guidance is of the essence of social work, for deprived children as for other members of the community.<sup>464</sup>

Though it is unstated in the report, this type of commentary was a tacit admission that some post-war welfare reforms that affected children had resulted in a lack of communication between different strands of the welfare state and encouraged duplication of effort; the issue of so-called 'problem families' who made demands on multiple areas of health and welfare provision. So too was the knowledge that children were often the major casualties when the problems of such families could not easily be resolved by such a disparate system of welfare provision. As the report further stated: '[t]roubles seldom come singly'.<sup>465</sup>

The 1968 Act put in place a new organisational unit, the local authority Social Work Department, whose aim was to provide support and guidance for all, including

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<sup>463</sup> Ibid., p. 337.

<sup>464</sup> Social Work and the Community (HMSO, Edinburgh, 1966), p. 3.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

deprived children. This major shift was motivated both by the prevention agenda and a will to comprehensively address the effects of social deprivation in all its manifestations within Scotland. It is not overstating the ambition of this legislation to say that it sought to counter the commonly held notion that the poor and disadvantaged 'would always be with us'. A confidence existed that widespread social problems could be addressed effectively.<sup>466</sup> The idea was that this new department would be able to coordinate its interventions across several different and formerly separate areas. Of course, where child welfare was concerned, a few local authority children's services had been moving towards this mode of operation for some years—the case study of Motherwell and Wishaw (Case Study XVII) and the example of Renfrewshire (Section 6) described in Part 1 of this report are two examples. But the 1968 Act gave an even more central role to social work departments and to social workers for ensuring the welfare of children.

## Implementation

As we have seen, the great organisational change that was made in 1948 with the introduction of separate Children's Departments did not necessarily usher in hoped for changes in practice.

Knowledge that this was the case propelled the beliefs of those in favour of wider reform and it was argued by some that the very 'genesis' of the Social Work Act was, in fact, the Children's Act of 1948.<sup>467</sup> Indeed one commissioned analysis of the new legislation reassured readers that the new Act fully incorporated 'the main measures of the Children's Act'.<sup>468</sup> Certainly, this kind of assimilation can be seen in section 15 of the 1968 Act where it states that: 'it shall be the duty of the local authority to receive the child into their care'; and in section 20, which asserts local authorities

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<sup>466</sup> Ian Brodie, Chris Nottingham and Stephen Plunkett, 'A Tale of Two Reports: Social Work in Scotland from "Social Work and the Community" (1966) to "Changing Lives" (2006)', *The British Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 38: 4, Special Issue on The History of Social Work (June 2008), pp. 697-715.

<sup>467</sup> 'The Social Work Scotland Act 1968': Paper given by Vera Hiddleston at Edinburgh University, 3 November 2006; available online via the Social Work History Network site at: [http://www.socialwork.ed.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/227922/Social\\_Work\\_History\\_Network\\_paper\\_2008.pdf](http://www.socialwork.ed.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/227922/Social_Work_History_Network_paper_2008.pdf) [Accessed 12/10/2018].

<sup>468</sup> Report by a Working Party on the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, *Social Work in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1969), p. 25. The working party was formed in 1968 on the initiative of the Department of Social Administration at the University of Edinburgh and was partly funded by the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust; its chair was Prof. W.J.M. Mackenzie of the University of Glasgow, for this reason it is sometimes referred to as the Mackenzie Report. The working party was made up of academics and senior local government officers, including the Assistant Children's Officer in Glasgow.

must 'exercise their powers with respect to him so as to further his best interests, and to afford him opportunity for the proper development of his character and abilities.'<sup>469</sup> These examples paraphrase famous lines from the 1948 Act. The tenets of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 are also clear in section 12 of the Social Work Act wherein 'a child under the age of eighteen' is specified as one of the groups to which the promotion of 'social welfare' is a duty for local authorities.

However, there were aspects of the Social Work Act that affected children that were truly innovative. The findings of the Kilbrandon Report are usually recalled as the watershed element affecting the treatment of children within the 1968 Act, with the introduction of Children's Hearings being viewed as a revolutionary new way of providing appropriate care and supervision for children at risk. So, the Social Work Act had both the legacy of the past *and* the promise of the new underpinning its aims; but to this dual set of influences a further must be added, and that is the growing professionalization of social work. This was a factor that was implicit within this Act—effective social interventions required knowledgeable and experienced social workers. Changes in the way social workers were educated and put their knowledge and professional judgment into practice did proceed to have effects on the care of children, though none of this change would come about immediately. For example, in an otherwise optimistic analysis undertaken in 1968 by a working party looking at what 'the possible effects' of the Act might be for the Scottish people, the authors were unable to say how it might affect fostering practices:

We have made no attempt to gather evidence about the special difficulties of adoption and fostering and of decision between these possibilities and some form of institutional care. Responsibility for decisions falls on the social work department, and on the parents or relatives where there are any, and it is at present hard to find any standard except that of professional judgement. It will require careful long-term research to give us any objective measure of the success or failure of decisions in this area.<sup>470</sup>

Local authorities were encouraged by the Scottish Office in 1968 to tread carefully at first and begin by extending their 'thinking and planning. The major change needed at this first stage is not an increase in the amount of social work done, but a redeployment to secure that the known need is tackled in the new context set up by

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<sup>469</sup> The Social Work Scotland Act 1968, Part I, s. 15.1 & s.20.1.

<sup>470</sup> Social Work in Scotland (1969), p. 38.

the Act.<sup>471</sup> Remarks like this do demonstrate that underneath the optimism, there was some anxiety that so much change could not be introduced in a rush without the risk of some essential aspects of welfare being overlooked, including the safety and wellbeing of children. Given the scope of this legislation, it was clear that it could not be implemented overnight, and the handover of responsibilities did need to be carefully monitored.

## **Structures and mechanisms in place to protect children in the care of the state after 1968**

The Social Work Act was implemented in stages with 52 social work departments being opened in 1969, each under the oversight of a Director of Social Work.<sup>472</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, the decision to base departments in the cities, burghs, and counties of Scotland would continue to produce iniquitous consequences for child welfare—the burden of looking after children in Scotland’s industrial cities and large burghs was always going to be larger and more complex than in small burghs. Moreover, obtaining adequate staffing for large social work departments remained a challenge. Once again, oversight of the departments was undertaken by committees of elected members. The structure of local authorities differed slightly across Scotland, and this too presented more challenges for large authorities in which finance committees were more at a distance from those concerned with welfare services. Set to augment potential troubles for the new departments as they bedded down was the potential administrative upset that was to come about through local government reorganisation: this was introduced in 1975-6 following the findings of the Wheatley Commission (1969).

As Norrie has summarised, the

1968 Act required local authorities to establish social work committees to carry out their functions not only under the 1968 Act itself but also under the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act, 1937, the Matrimonial Proceedings (Children) Act, 1958, Part 1 of the Children Act, 1958 (private fostering), the Adoption Act, 1958 and the Housing Act 1964, together with existing functions of local health authorities which were transferred to local authorities.<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>471</sup> Social Work Services Group, ‘Circular SW6/1968: Reorganisation of Services’, Quoted in Murphy, British Social Services, pp. 171-2.

<sup>472</sup> There were six local authorities who combined to form single social work departments, for example, Midlothian combined with East Lothian and Peebles (in the Scottish Borders).

<sup>473</sup> Norrie, Legislative Background, pp. 80-1.

Over time, this raft of legislation would obtain further additions. However, at the outset, once social work departments were set up and where there was any question of a child being brought into care, this might be via two main routes—either voluntarily (generally under section 15 of the 1968 Act) or via compulsory measure (Section 16).

The nature of how a child was brought into care did, of course, influence the type of choices made about the nature of care. Generally, in the majority of cases, central to the Act was that the break-up of families should only ever be considered by welfare services where children were at serious risk if they remained in the family home. In respect of children's welfare, and excluding cases of adoption, the options available to the new social work departments in respect of children requiring intervention were as follows:

- Reception into residential care
- Arrangements made for foster care
- Provision of help and support for families so that children could remain in their own homes, including financial help, use of day care facilities, or the assistance of home helps; and additionally-
- The provision of supervision by a case worker for children who remained in their own homes but whose welfare required ongoing monitoring.

To enable the out-of-family options outlined, the departments could:

- Operate residential homes, hostels and schools for the care of children
- Make use of facilities provided via the voluntary sector, e.g. children's homes, residential schools and hostels,
- Recruit foster carers—who were prepared to care for children either short or longer-term.

Thus, where the protection of children put at risk because of neglect or deprivation was concerned, there was little immediate change in the options available after 1968 for those children who did have to be removed from their homes. It was not until the introduction of Children's Hearings, which came later—beginning in some authorities in 1971—that further reform in decision making for children came about.



Increasingly, the panel system made no distinctions among children needing care and protection, whether they had broken the law or had come to the attention of social work for other reasons. With this innovation, the position of Remand Homes and Approved Schools as places where children received custodial care came under review; there would be further change made in terms of who ran such facilities, what oversight there was of their activities, and how children were looked after when it was deemed that residential schooling and training was necessary for their welfare (see section 7).

Throughout all these shifts, the principal factor affecting the welfare of children was pressure upon social workers to somehow find ways of keeping families together; or reuniting them after the shortest possible interval of separation involving any form of residential or foster care. The days of long-term boarding out being the preferred option were over, at least for most children. Yet, evidence contained in social work files for Strathclyde region demonstrates that this practice was not quite defunct. An item of correspondence dating from September 1976 indicates that some authorities in west central Scotland were still sending children to the Highlands and maintaining them there:

Two weeks ago I had to be up in the Western Isle to see the Director of Social Work about the supervision of Strathclyde children in the islands and visited ----  
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Other parts of this letter from Strathclyde's Director of Social Work, indicate that the child being visited, who exhibited symptoms of what is described in the letter as 'deprived syndrome', had been separated from a sibling who was boarded nearer to home; his usual supervision was being performed by an officer based in the Western Isles authority appointed by Strathclyde region, the latter being a practice which had hitherto been frowned upon.<sup>474</sup>

Overall, it can be seen that the main burden of ensuring the welfare of children in need of some form of care and protection in Scotland remained with local authorities. Where the central administration is concerned, the Act was not emphatic about their role in providing oversight via inspection. How the different responsibilities of the Act worked in practice in terms of the involvement of local and central government are described in the remainder of section 7.3 of this report.

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<sup>474</sup> GCA SR27-14-3-3-4: Children in Care—General; Letter from F. E. Edwards [Director of Social Work, Strathclyde Region] to A. Hosie, Senior Social Worker, dated 22 September 1976.

## Oversight by Secretary of State (Scottish Office)

Preparations to introduce new legislation began in March 1967 at the Scottish Office with the formation of the Social Work Services Group (SWSG). Now services that previously had been overseen by personnel in different departments at the Scottish Office would operate within one department. It has been asserted that the 1968 Act arose out of an 'interplay of public opinion and professional opinion'.<sup>475</sup> Accordingly, the makeup of the SWSG included professional social work staff as well as government administrators and was formally answerable to an elected representative—the Secretary of State for Scotland.<sup>476</sup>

The SWSG was expected to assist with the bill's drafting and passage into law, spread the news to local authorities and voluntary providers about how the new legislation would operate, and carry on with many of the functions previously performed by some of the personnel who joined the new Group. This included inspection of residential homes and services provided by local authorities as well as those provided by voluntary organisations for children. It is not surprising that after 1968 there are few surviving inspection records for this was a government function that was rapidly coming to an end to be replaced by what can only be described as a policy making and policy review body.

This is not to say that central government officers were not active in working with local authorities and voluntary groups, at least initially. There is evidence that some inspection visits continued into the 1970s. In the early 1970s for example, Quarrier's Village was visited on two occasions, thus continuing what had been a relatively close supervision of this organisation by government inspectors.<sup>477</sup> Yet this input diminished rapidly and instead, a great age of circulars addressed to local authority social work departments commenced. 1971 has been described as 'a vintage year of SWSG circulars, 29 in all'.<sup>478</sup> Several of the latter were directly concerned with services for children, including circulars about the setting up of Children's Hearings.

However, in the following years, there was a disengagement by central government with the workday activities of local authorities where child care was concerned. In

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<sup>475</sup> Social Work in Scotland, p. 82.

<sup>476</sup> For administrative purposes i.e. financial accountability, SWSG was formally attached to the Scottish Education Department but as an operational group it was autonomous.

<sup>477</sup> NRS ED11/708/2 Voluntary Homes, 1958-1974, Quarrier's Homes, Bridge of Weir: Inspectors' Reports. CLOSED FILES..

<sup>478</sup> Murphy, British Social Services, p. 176.

part, this was due to one well-worn factor and one new feature in the delivery of child welfare services. Local government had always resented interference from central government and the Scottish Office was, accordingly, often cautious about stirring up such resentment. But a new influence on the choice to back away from direct inspection of services, which seemed to evolve within the central administration, was the growing professionalism of social work at local authority level.<sup>479</sup> Under the 1968 Act local authorities now had a duty to identify priorities and to organise services that directly addressed these through an integrated social work department that would be staffed by qualified personnel. The onus was on the local authorities themselves and vested in the power given to Social Work Directors to implement and monitor services. Meantime, in 1968-9, staff in the former inspectorates were re-organised into the Central Advisory Service (operating as part of SWSG) who advised service providers but did not necessarily direct them.

A further important factor perhaps underpinning the approach taken by central government was that the registration and inspection of children's homes—run by both public authorities and voluntary organisations—was no longer the responsibility of the Scottish Office. Under the 1968 Act, this was handed over to social work departments.<sup>480</sup>

Yet, with the bulk of responsibility for welfare issues being handed to local government under the legislation, the Scottish Office still had a role to play. All activities by social work departments were formally performed under directions and guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Scotland. The notion of 'guidance' as opposed to instruction is worth noting—in the end, if things went wrong in matters of child care, the central administration were supposed to step in to offer 'general guidance'.<sup>481</sup> The Secretary of State could also issue directions, i.e. 'make regulations in relation to the performance of the functions assigned to local authorities by this Act and in relation to the activities of voluntary organisations in so far as those activities are concerned with the like purposes.'<sup>482</sup> In addition, central government retained the power, which it had owned under the Children Act, to require local authorities to remove children from places where they had been placed (boarded) if

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<sup>479</sup> Murphy, *British Social Services*, pp. 157-8 and pp. 170-1.

<sup>480</sup> *Social Work (Scotland) Act, 1968: Part IV Para 62 (1)*.

<sup>481</sup> *The Social Work Scotland Act 1968, Part I, S. 5 (1)*.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 (2).

their welfare was imperilled by this.<sup>483</sup> Further to this, any person empowered by the Secretary of State still had the right of entry into:

- (a) any residential or other establishment provided by a local authority or a voluntary organisation or other person for the purposes of this Act;
- (b) any place where there is being maintained—
  - (i) a foster child within the meaning of the Children Act 1958,
  - (ii) a protected child within the meaning of Part IV of the Adoption Act 1958;
- (c) any place where any person is for the time being boarded out by a local authority or a voluntary organisation.<sup>484</sup>

In practice however—while government inspectorates may have visited children’s departments and residential facilities providing childcare, and they may have offered both criticism and advice—their powers to compel change where practices were found wanting were limited. We have not recovered any written evidence that intimates that the Secretary of State ever considered compulsory closure of a facility or where he required a local authority to remove children from an establishment. This is not to say that government inspectors did not exert pressure on local authorities or voluntary providers to improve their services. We have seen examples in the case of Glasgow Children’s Department and Quarrier’s Homes in the mid-1960s where this was the case. However, pressure took the form of advice and follow-up monitoring and this mode of operating simply developed after 1968 until formal inspection was abandoned in the case of children’s homes, although it continued for other types of residential facilities such as assessment centres and List D schools (see ‘List D Schools’ in Chapter 7). The question of whether closer monitoring via an inspection regime was needed was one that was considered at various points in the following two decades, but as we shall see, it took this amount of time before a reintroduction was viewed as a necessity.

As an extension of its remit, and in place of an inspectorate, the SWSG obtained an advisory wing: the Central Advisory Service (CAS) began as a small team that

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<sup>483</sup> Ibid., 5 (3) (d).

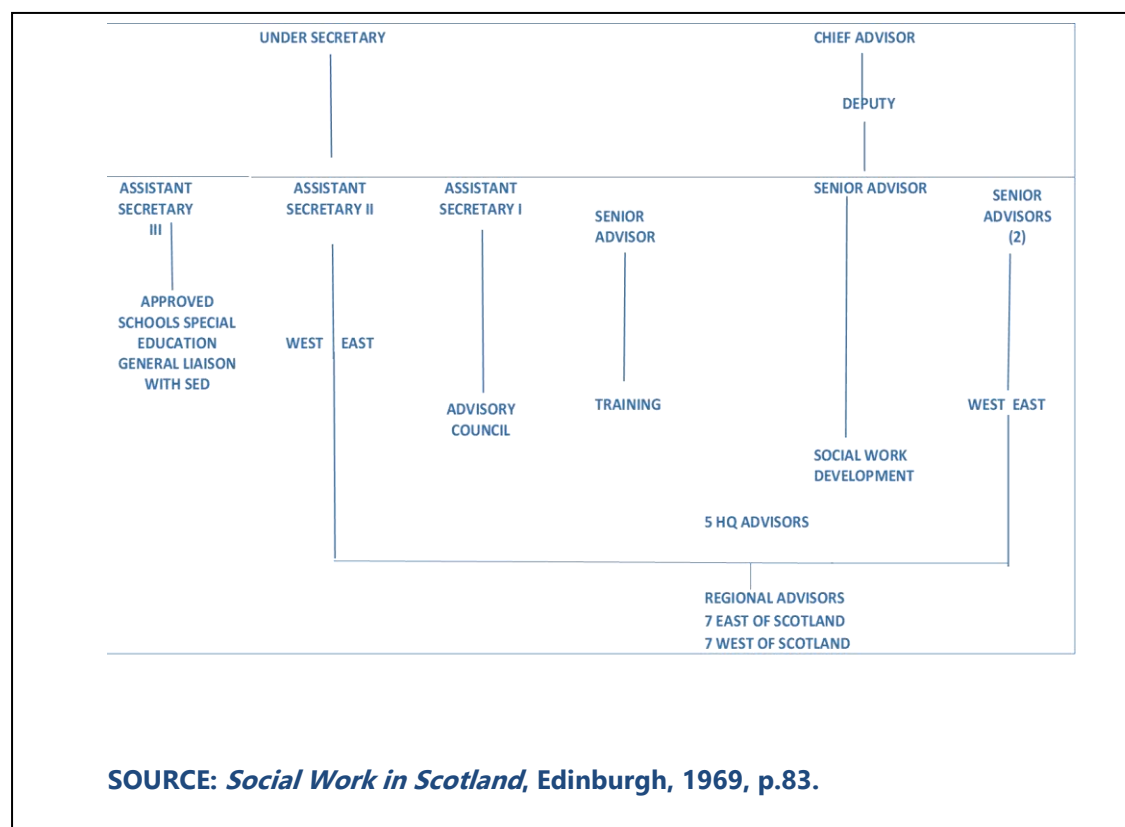
<sup>484</sup> Ibid., 6 (1) (a)-(c).

gradually expanded in size during the 1970s. To begin with, some of its personnel came from the childcare inspectorate, but there was no designated childcare team within CAS. Childcare issues had no priority in a system where all social needs, from care of the elderly to care of adult offenders, were pressing. Thus, the case of care of deprived children moved from having been the alleged genesis of new legislation in social welfare to become simply a single element within what aimed to be an integrated service.

CAS was made up as follows:

The former welfare officers and child care and probation inspectorate were reorganised into a Central Advisory Service of the Social Work Services Group to provide social work advice on the development of the services. The Chief Social Work Adviser had been appointed in 1968; during 1969 a Deputy Chief Adviser was appointed as were 3 Senior Advisers—1 with responsibility for the social work services in the West and North and East respectively and one with particular responsibility for training.<sup>485</sup>

This organisation is illustrated below:



<sup>485</sup> Social Work in Scotland, p. 83.

Advertisements were placed for the role of Chief Advisor in August 1967. These requested candidates with wide experience of social services who had held 'a responsible appointment concerned with the administration and practice of social work' and with 'professional qualifications in some field of social work an advantage'.<sup>486</sup> At least part of the role of one of the Assistant Secretaries appointed was to service the Advisory Council. The latter was a new incarnation of what had gone before under the Children's Act—though this time the Council had a remit that encompassed not just childcare but also the advisory responsibilities that had been undertaken by other such Councils, for example that concerned with after care and probation for adult offenders. The Council was set up by summer 1971:

In July the first meeting was held of the Advisory Council on Social Work, under the chairmanship of Principal James Drever of Dundee University. The Act of 1968 provides for this Council to be appointed by the Secretary of State 'for the purpose of advising him on matters connected with the performance of his functions and those of local authorities in relation to social welfare, and with the activities of voluntary organisations connected with those functions'.<sup>487</sup>

Throughout the following two decades, the SWSG and CAS would become involved with some issues concerning childcare. These were often caused by potential scandals such as the deaths of children in care and were of such importance that they came to the notice of the Secretary of State. In instances such as these, SWSG had a clear role to play in investigating events and the conduct of local authorities. Where List D Schools were concerned, officials from CAS continued to inspect. Beyond these types of involvement, however, the role of the Scottish Office was much less routine, and much more concerned with general oversight. This meant the issuing of policies and advice communicated in circulars. These aimed to provide guidance to local authorities in their planning and delivery of social care services.

### [The Role of Local authorities](#)

By 1969, local authority childcare officers whose profession had emerged because of the Clyde Report and the Children Act were enfolded within Social Work Departments alongside professionals from other areas of social work—be they welfare, probation and mental health officers, or social workers in the hitherto

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<sup>486</sup> Aberdeen Press and Journal, 30 August 1967, p. 8.

<sup>487</sup> Scottish Education Department, Social Work in Scotland in 1970, Cmnd. 4834 (Edinburgh, 1971), p. 6.



specialist fields of general medicine and psychiatry.<sup>488</sup> The ambition to provide social welfare for all meant that the age of the generic social worker had commenced, and a difficult job became even more complex.

All children, regardless of the decisions made about their care, were assigned a supervising social worker. Continuity of care, including oversight by a dedicated worker, had long been advocated in the care of children and—at least since new regulations were issued in 1959—case reviews had been recommended. In practice, particularly in large authorities, care of children was often *task-driven* rather than *case-driven* and thus performed by a collective of workers within children's departments who were each dedicated to individual areas of business such as boarding out or adoption work. The introduction of Children's Hearings also meant that (for many children) de facto background reports had to be prepared, case conferences organised, and attendance at hearings recorded—all of which aimed to create more rigour within the childcare system, but which created a huge administrative workload. In charge of each of these departments was a Director of Social Work.

The schedule for the changeover was explained in the final annual report produced by the Scottish Office on childcare matters:

The effects of the 1968 Act, which will create a social work department of the local authority and give the authority comprehensive social work powers, these were explained in Circular No. S.W.6/1968 of 19th December 1968. The Secretary of State announced on 28th January that he had decided that the new social work service should commence on 17th November 1969. This means that before the end of 1969 child care work will be integrated into the new social work service. The system of children's panels will be introduced in the course of 1970-71. This Report for 1968 will be the last report on child care in Scotland in its present form. Information about child care in Scotland in subsequent years will be contained in reports on local authority social work services as a whole.<sup>489</sup>

How such departments were to be staffed depended on their size. On the eve of the Act, the city of Glasgow had oversight of 2,776 children in some form of residential care (including those boarded out), while even quite a large burgh like Kilmarnock,

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<sup>488</sup> Social Work in Scotland, p. 3.

<sup>489</sup> Social Work Services Group, Child Care in Scotland (including Remand Homes and Approved Schools: A Report of the Secretary of State for Scotland, Cmnd. 4069 (Edinburgh, July 1968), paras 2 & 4, p. 7.

looked after only 127 such children.<sup>490</sup> The numbers of children and adults needing support were not the only factor that influenced the workload of departments—exactly how children were cared for also affected this. Preventative work and supervision of children in their family homes could be very labour intensive.<sup>491</sup> The character of the local population also might have an effect on the deployment of staff. Areas carrying greater levels of general deprivation were work-intensive and this directly affected children since often social workers now took on case work for entire families. One result was that the needs of adults within deprived families often seemed to push the needs of children into a more peripheral place.<sup>492</sup> Describing the typical labour of the social worker in this period becomes more difficult as so much depended on the nature of local communities as well as the multiple problems that might be presented by families. The individual difficulties of children were set alongside the latter factors.

There were various options for children in need of care available to the new social services when they were set up, but these departments also inherited the legacy of children already within the system in a variety of different types of care. Some of the latter were boarded out, though it was considerably less likely they would be placed in remote districts. In Glasgow there had already been some changes implemented in foster care before the new department came into being. In its Annual Report for 1967-8 the Children's Department noted that in the period since the Department was formed, the number of children in residential care of some form—either in homes or in foster care—had declined from 3,234 in 1950 to 2,777 in 1968. The proportion of this figure placed in foster homes remained around 65-70 percent though the geographical distribution of those boarded out had changed significantly by this point, with homes in the Highlands no longer being favoured and a small majority of children—52 percent—boarded in Glasgow and a further substantial number in neighbouring counties.<sup>493</sup> In 1968, SWSG, in the annual Scottish Office Report on Child Care, reiterated the view that the aim now was to return children to their parents whenever possible and that rehabilitation of families was the preferred

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<sup>490</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>491</sup> GCA, SR27-14-3-3-4: Children in Care—General; 'Children's Supervision Enquiry', pp. 2-4.

<sup>492</sup> The case study XX below is one example of this in practice.

<sup>493</sup> The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children's Department Nineteenth Annual Report 1967-1968, p. 8.

approach.<sup>494</sup> This approach was aimed at all children—whether they were already in care or newly brought into care.

Use of voluntary homes and residential schools by local authorities—although this now entered into a stop-start, but all the same progressive decline—continued for a significant minority of children. Large local authorities also still operated residential accommodation in outlying areas and the burden of casework increased because of the imperative to return children home whenever possible. Often the problems experienced by children's families were multiple; this factor resulted in very large amounts of social work input being concerned with the domestic, financial, health, and welfare needs of parents and siblings. For social workers to assure the wellbeing of children, this meant they also had to become involved with their wider family circumstances. Such work entailed greater levels of liaison with other professionals and external bodies involved with the family, not solely those charged with the care of the children themselves.

Accordingly, the bureaucratic burden also increased. In 1971, social workers in Glasgow received a new set of guidelines. These indicated that when children were to be received into care under Section 15 of the new Act, the following considerations must first be made:

1) Prevention

When an application is made to receive a child into the care of the Department the following alternatives should be investigated viz:-

- a. check on possibility of a day nursery placement;
- b. check on possibility of a home help being supplied;
- c. check on possibility of relatives or friends helping;
- d. check on possibility of assistance in kind or cash.

2) Reception into Care

- a. ensure that the form of application has been understood and signed by the parent;
- b. complete documentation S.W.D.1., S.W.D.2., etc.
- c. submit Vacancy Requisition Form duly authorized by Area Officer
  - i. to Mr Fyfe -Admissions Officer, Room 39, 20 Cochrane Street, who will allocate vacancy.
  - ii. where indicated, to Mrs Marsh for short-term placement. In an **Emergency** the request may be made by telephone.

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<sup>494</sup> NRS ED11/807: Social Work Services Group Annual and Periodic Reports, Child Care. Draft report for 1968, p. 8.

- d. send duplicate copies of S.W.D.1 and S.W.D.2 to Finance Section to enable Parental Contribution Assessment to be made;
  - e. complete Admission Slip for residential Establishment;
  - f. complete Boarding or transfer Slip in triplicate (one copy remains in the book and two copies sent to Miss Hay);
  - g. arrange medical examination for child either by parent taking child to family G.P. or by Officer taking child to the appropriate Clinic. (See Clinic Roster, Area Officers Memo 5/70 19<sup>th</sup> March 1970). *The Clinic must be given prior notice by telephone;*
  - h. take child to Home with M.R.1. or Foster-Parent Book, Medical Card, Milk Token Book (under 5 years), Baptismal Certificate (R.C.), Social History and Birth Certificate if adolescent being admitted to a Hostel.
    - 1. ensure that child/children have adequate clothing if being placed in short-term foster home or if Matron requests it.
- N.B. ensure that middle section of transfer slip is fully completed by the Matron or person receiving the child and the necessary documents Birth Certificate, Medical Card etc.<sup>495</sup>

Residential care and foster care were still available options where children could not remain at home or with family and friends. The guidelines proceed to give further lengthy instructions about discharge and about supervision during the time the child remained in care by voluntary agreement with a parent or guardian under Section 15 of the Act. Where oversight of the child was concerned, the 1959 Regulations remained in force and the child—whether placed in a home or with a foster parent—had to be visited ‘at 3-monthly intervals’.<sup>496</sup> In the case of children where preventative measures were put in place however, the need to monitor these and give continuing support remained.

The evidence indicating whether social workers were able to adhere to all of this practice can only be found in children’s case files. Given the level of form-filling involved—whatever decision was arrived at—perhaps unsurprisingly, case files for this period are extremely difficult to interrogate. Aside from the morass of paperwork contained in such documentation, information about a child’s journey within the care system is often spread across separate files—family files and individual case files—and presently, there is no guarantee that these might be archived together. Consequently, the recovery of a case file can, and does, often only supply a very partial picture of what influences were brought to bear on decisions made about the

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<sup>495</sup> GCA, ref. SR27/14/3/3/1: ‘Corporation of Glasgow—Social Work Department: Guide Notes for Social Workers’ (April 1971), Section O, p. 1.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid., Section O, p. 2.

child's welfare when they arrived in care by this route. In a sample of boxes containing files of children who entered care in Glasgow in this period and which were made available to us, these issues were very evident.<sup>497</sup>

In comparing the notes on children by case workers in the early 1970s with that done in the 1950s discussed in Part I of this report, we can easily identify that in the later period case workers appeared to understand general welfare issues as they affected children and families. Though it is worth bearing in mind that the staff of new departments might overall be made up of two different types of workers—those who had transferred over from the old- children's departments, and some who were newly qualified social workers. A 1964 report indicates that before the adoption of the Social Work Act most of Glasgow's childcare officers possessed educational qualifications such as a certificate in Social Studies or in Social Welfare.<sup>498</sup> Those staff coming into the service at the end of the 1960s and 70s with Diplomas in Social Work were more explicitly trained to appreciate the value of joined-up service provision. In this time of flux, it is a moot question which of these types of social workers found this transition least difficult to negotiate.

The case studies in Section 8 below, explore some of these issues and how they translated to the recording and monitoring of children's experiences of care and, consequently, how far we can now interpret the efficacy of the measures delivered. The general approach of social workers to children post-1969 can be ascertained from these case studies and they reveal that a combination of social work assistance while children remained in their own homes together with spells in residential care of varying duration was certainly one way of dealing with children during the 1970s when they were under the supervision of Social Work Departments.

### Children's Hearings

When children were brought to the attention of local government social work departments by compulsory measures this involved Children's Hearings. These were formally implemented in 1971, though different local authorities took varying amounts of time to set them up. In Glasgow there was prompt implementation and the following guidance about how the system would work was provided to staff:

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<sup>497</sup> We are extremely grateful to Dr Irene O'Brien, Senior Archivist, and the staff of Glasgow City Archives for facilitating this difficult process as seamlessly as possible.

<sup>498</sup> NRS ED11/756 SAC (T) (65) 6: Appendix A.

Part III of the Social Work (Scotland) Act, 1968, introduced a new system of Children's Panels and Hearings to deal with children in need of compulsory measures of care. This replaces the system of juvenile courts as, only on the instruction of the Lord Advocate, will a child be prosecuted for an offence and then only in the High Court of Sheriff Court. The types of cases which will be prosecuted have been specified by the Lord Advocate.

#### Application of Part III of the Act to Glasgow

The provisional arrangements which have been made are detailed below but as this part of the Act only came into force on 15 April, 1971, these arrangements are liable to change in the course of experience.

A Reporter (the executive of the Children's Hearing) has been appointed and he will be assisted by Assistant Reporters. The City has been divided into areas and each Assistant Reporter will be responsible for one of these areas and the Hearings held in that area.

Where the Reporter receives information from any source of a case which may require a Children's Hearing to be arranged he may, after making initial investigation:

- a) take no further action, or
- b) refer the case to the local authority for arrangements to be made for advice, guidance and assistance to be given to the child and the family, or
- c) where he considers the child to be in need of compulsory measures of care, he shall arrange a Children's Hearing.

In the above paragraph the words "after making initial investigation" could imply that the Reporter could request a report from a social worker before deciding which of the above decisions to take but the Reporter does not envisage that such reports will be required in every case reported to him. Also, where the Reporter has decided to refer a case for social work advice, guidance and assistance without compulsion i.e. heading "b" above, the Reporter has stated that his Department will not request such voluntary supervision without prior consultation with the Social Work Department.<sup>499</sup>

This additional commentary concerning what to do with children judged to require only 'advice, guidance and assistance' makes this task sound like a relatively small

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<sup>499</sup> GCA, ref: SR27/14/3/3/1: 'Corporation of Glasgow—Social Work Department: Guide Notes for Social Workers' (April 1971), Section K (no page nos.)



matter but such children and their families did sometimes require more input and they added to the workload of social work departments. Social workers were to be allowed 'ample time' to construct reports and submit these, which had to be made 'available to the appropriate Children's Panel members at least five days prior to the Hearing'. The advice goes on to say that 'much reliance' would be placed on these reports.<sup>500</sup>

The system of hearings was designed to identify cases where preventative measures would be better than attempts at a punitive cure (such as children being sent to Approved Schools), but for it to work there had to have been sufficient resources in place to deliver the appropriate assistance—this meant departments having enough trained and experienced personnel to act as case workers to children and their families.

In the first full year of their operation, children who appeared before Panels do seem to have been more confined to those deemed in need of 'compulsory' care. Statistics relating to these were still incomplete when the annual report on social work for the whole of Scotland was published in July 1973, but preliminary figures appeared as follows:

2.13 ...The number of reports in respect of children considered to be in need of compulsory measures of care was 21,501. There were 33,422 grounds for referral in these reports. 19,024 reports came from the police, and related to 30,767 alleged offences.

2.14 Out of all reports received by reporters 10,840 were referred to a children's hearing. Decisions reached by hearings were along the following lines:

a. In 3,699 cases the hearing decided not to impose a supervision requirement on the child.

b. In 5,524 cases, the child was placed under supervision of the social work department (usually at home).

c. In 1,617 cases, a supervision requirement was made requiring a child to reside in a residential establishment (nearly always, as in 1971, a List D school).<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> Ibid.

<sup>501</sup> Scottish Education Department, *Social Work in Scotland in 1972*, Cmnd. 5337 (Edinburgh, 1973), p. 11.

By 1975 however, the number of children referred to the Reporter was 29,267 (based on incomplete figures) broken down as follows:

14,216 of these cases were referred to Children's Hearings by the Reporters. The decisions of the hearings are given below.

(a) In 6,516 cases the child was placed under the supervision of the local authority social work department, usually at home. (46 per cent of cases against 47 per cent in 1973.)

(b) In 1,412 cases a supervision requirement was made requiring the child to reside in a residential establishment (usually a list D school.) (10 per cent of cases against 12 per cent in 1973.)

(c) In 5,834 cases the hearing decided not to impose a supervision requirement on the child (as 41 per cent in 1973.)<sup>502</sup>

Increases like this raised the profile of the hearings. In 1977, one Panel member wrote a newspaper article in defence of this system of juvenile care responding to public criticism, which pointed out that the work of the Hearings was not exclusively restricted to children who had committed a crime:

WHEN I hear the term "panel beater," I'm not too sure now whether a metal worker or certain MP is being referred to. Since their inception in 1971, Children's Panels have come in for a great deal of criticism. This is as it should be; no organisation, voluntary or statutory can afford to believe it is beyond criticism. But what is irritating about much of the criticism, is the assumption that everything went wrong with the introduction of the 1968 Social Work (Scotland) Act, and that previously all was well in the field of Juvenile justice. Probably the most common misunderstanding in the statistics relating to Children's Hearings, is the insistence on comparing children prosecuted in the courts before 1971 and those referred to the Reporter since. It would be more realistic to compare those prosecuted with those who go to hearings...from these figures it is important to take out those referred for truancy or beyond parental control, few of whom would have seen the inside of a court room under the previous system. Then there are the children who have been taken into care via the Hearings through no fault of their own, generally because their parents are unable to care for them.

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<sup>502</sup> Scottish Education Department, Social Work in Scotland in 1974, Cmnd. 6153 (Edinburgh, 1975), p. 12.

Furthermore, there are cases so apparently trivial that they would have been unlikely to result in a prosecution prior to 1971, but because of other information available to the Reporter, Hearings have seemed the most appropriate action. Each child who appears at a Hearing has [an] initial appearance; this may be continued for further reports on the child, or even just to give the child and his family time to think over the reality of his situation. In this case, there is a further Hearing and as each compulsory supervision requirement must be reviewed within a year, it is possible for a single antisocial act to result in a number of Hearings.<sup>503</sup>

Of significance in the increase in children referred to Panels is the apparent drop, or at the very least, stability in the number referred as needing residential care. The greater diversity of reasons why children were referred has something to do with this, as the correspondent to the press highlighted, and a different attitude towards the limitations of what might be achieved by sending a child to a List D establishment is also relevant. Yet on top of this was the fact that places in List D Schools quickly became oversubscribed under the Social Work Act. Fewer numbers of children entering the care system via the Hearings should not be taken to mean that fewer children overall required residential care. This issue will be further discussed in Section 8.

## Summary

Oversight of welfare policy that remained the responsibility of the central administration was performed by the Social Work Services Group and the Central Advisory Service, based within this group. Day-to-day responsibility for children remained with local authorities. In addition, except for List D Schools for which there were transitional arrangements, the registration of facilities for the residential care of children passed to local authorities—including those facilities run by voluntary organisations in their respective areas.<sup>504</sup>

The trend in childcare from the early 1970s was that the majority of children who entered the care system spent shorter periods being cared for outwith their birth families and much more time remaining with parents or other kin to whom advice and guidance were given that aimed to protect the welfare of children, together with

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<sup>503</sup> 'It's a tricky panel game' by Mrs Morag Morrell, Aberdeen Evening Express, 30 June 1977, p. 8. Mrs Morrell was said to have been a Panel member in Aberdeen since 1971.

<sup>504</sup> See Social Work (Scotland) Act, Part IV & Schedule 7, Section 93; transitional arrangements were made when local authorities inherited this responsibility for residential homes that were already registered and those due to be registered while different part of the Act were adopted.

assistance in kind in order to prevent eviction and maintain a basic level of subsistence that enabled a child to remain with their family.

The options regarding the form of care appropriate for individual children were often decided by children's panels after 1971, but not exclusively so. Some children might be brought to notice by other routes, and unless referred to the Reporter were the sole responsibility of social work departments.

Local authorities also carried responsibility for those children placed in care prior to the Act, and more pressure was exerted in respect of these children about their return to their families where this was possible. Where local authorities assumed parental rights under section 16 of the Act (and also later, under the Children Act, 1975) the means of securing the long-term welfare of such youngsters was no longer a straightforward matter of finding a substitute family.

Information from case files is the only available resource that demonstrates how care options were managed in practice: whether children were visited every three months while they were in residential or foster care; what attempts were made to ensure that children's needs were met in the chosen care setting; if children were removed from wherever they were placed when concerns were identified; and perhaps most importantly, whether children's wishes and feelings were listened to.

# Care of Children in Practice Under the Social Work Act

## Introduction

In order to assess the effectiveness of organisational change from the point of view of protecting children from mistreatment and abuse we need to consider foster care and different forms of residential care separately, although it should be emphasised here that the pattern of uptake of different forms of care was subject to numerous shifts. (For example, use made of voluntary homes waxed and waned at different points in the decade or so after 1968.) While the days of finding a replacement home for children as the option of first choice were over for most, and certainly as a long-term solution, some children would continue to need this option. However, there were larger numbers who moved in and out of a variety of care solutions—spending some time with family members and some in children's homes or in foster care, or indeed, in residential schools. The remainder of this report is concerned with the cases of such children but will not dwell on those—the undoubted majority—who primarily remained in the family home, either under social work supervision or, who were formally discharged from some form of supervision to their families' care. It must be borne in mind that increasingly this group were a substantial number in the overall population of children who came to the notice of social work departments.

## Foster Care

In 1971 the annual Report on Social Work in Scotland had nothing to say on the issue of foster care.<sup>505</sup> The difficulty of finding suitable foster carers had been ongoing for decades in Scotland. We have noted in Part I of this Report how poor housing and generally low standards of living in many urban parts of Scotland inhibited the recruitment of sufficient foster families for children following the 1948 Act. By the late 1960s, developments in welfare provision as well as the slowly improving availability of council housing gradually changed this position; however, there were other factors that meant the search for foster families was still a challenge. Alongside improved standards of living were the desire for smaller families and the increasing movement of married women into the workplace. However, for children brought into care in Glasgow, rates of fostering were still high in comparative terms. The reason for this is almost certainly that a high percentage of

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<sup>505</sup> Scottish Education Department, *Social Work in Scotland in 1971*, Cmnd. 5136 (Edinburgh, 1971).

these children were being cared for by kin—143 out of a total of 295 in foster care in 1967—though we lack precise figures for this trend across all of Scotland.<sup>506</sup>

In the final annual report produced by Glasgow’s Children’s Department in 1968 we can see the trend in boarding out; at this time, the city was responsible for 4,992 children who were either in care or under some form of supervision.<sup>507</sup> Of these, 1,747 were in foster care.<sup>508</sup> Most of these children may have been in care for some time. If we look to those admitted during 1967-8 some trends become apparent. The following were fostered as both a long and short-term option:

Children admitted to and removed from the register of foster children (excluding short-term placements)<sup>509</sup>

<i><b>Enrolled during the year ended 31st May, 1967</b></i>	
<b>With new foster-parents outwith Glasgow</b>	46
<b>With established foster-parents outwith Glasgow</b>	46
<b>With new foster-parents in Glasgow</b>	27
<b>With established foster-parents in Glasgow</b>	33
<b>With relatives</b>	143
	<b>295</b>
<i><b>Removed from register during period</b></i>	
<b>Self-supporting and attained age of 18</b>	98
<b>Returned to parents or other relatives</b>	86
<b>Removed to Residential Homes</b>	30
<b>Transferred to Hostels or Training Establishments</b>	9

<sup>506</sup> The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children’s Department: Nineteenth Annual Report, 1967-1968, p. 10.

<sup>507</sup> The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children’s Department: Nineteenth Annual Report, 1967-1968, p. 16.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

<sup>509</sup> The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children’s Department: Nineteenth Annual Report, 1967-1968, p. 16.



<b>Adopted by Foster-parents</b>	30
<b>Other Reasons</b>	17
	<b>267</b>

Also of note in this report is the decline in the use of foster families in the north of Scotland; in 1968 only 77 children remained in the county of Inverness, 39 in Banffshire and 12 in Moray—though 164 were still residing in Ross and Cromarty.<sup>510</sup> Figures do show the vast majority of the total number being fostered were now in the city or its county environs in Lanarkshire, Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire. And they do suggest the move towards kinship foster care and of returning children from foster care to their birth families. Yet there were still 46 children newly placed ‘with new foster-parents outwith Glasgow’ and the same number ‘with established foster-parents outwith Glasgow’.<sup>511</sup> We do not know exactly where these children were placed, nor do we know how many might remain away from the city until they left care.

The status of non-kinship foster care as an interim measure is also underlined in the report when it is stated that there were ‘about 100 children in temporary foster-care’.<sup>512</sup> Within this figure ‘a marked increase in the number of babies placed by the Adoption staff in temporary foster-homes’ was noted.<sup>513</sup> The report further explains that this ‘need arises in cases where the baby is either not passed as medically fit for immediate adoption, or when the mother is undecided about adoption plans. This interim period gives her time to consider what is best for her child.’<sup>514</sup>

By the mid-1970s, although the numbers of children in care of some type in Glasgow had evidently climbed during the period following the introduction of a Social Work Department, before moving back to around their pre-1968 level, the use of foster care generally, can be seen as being in consistently gradual decline within statistics produced in the mid-1970s.<sup>515</sup>

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<sup>510</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>511</sup> The Corporation of the City of Glasgow Children’s Department: Nineteenth Annual Report, 1967-1968, p. 16.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> GCA, SR27-14-3-3-4: Children in Care—General, ‘Care of Children: Statistics, 1971-1976, Glasgow Division’, p. 1; this file contains a large number of miscellaneous documents relating to childcare in Glasgow around the mid-1970s and includes this four-page item detailing some statistics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total number of children in care</b>	<b>Total number of children in Foster Care (inc. supervised under the Adoption Act)</b>	<b>Supervised under Adoption Act</b>
<b>1973</b>	6262	1569	149
<b>1974</b>	5696	1534	135
<b>1975</b>	4704	1341	93
<b>1976</b>	4311	1117	Not known

Over a decade on, the downward trend in the number of children brought into foster care was noted in a report produced for Strathclyde Region's Social Work Committee in 1981. This states that between April 1979 and March 1981, in around 370 cases where the city had assumed parental rights for a child, 86 children were in foster care and 37 were being fostered with a view to adoption.<sup>516</sup>

The shortage of foster carers was a problem that continued to grow. The important report, 'Room to Grow', published by Strathclyde Region at the end of the 1970s, highlighted that what was becoming known as 'family care' had different strands: short-term, long-term, and inclusive or exclusive. The latter two strands referred to foster families who would accept children where the birth family might still have an active involvement or those who preferred to be exclusive and would only accept children where their families were uninvolved.<sup>517</sup> This distinction reflected better awareness by social workers of what withdrawing a child from its natural family and from knowledge of this family might entail over the longer term.<sup>518</sup>

Various difficulties with finding suitable foster parents are described in this report among which were the preference by some families for pre-school children, a lack of

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<sup>516</sup> GCA, Supplementary Research Report submitted as part of the agenda for a meeting of Strathclyde Region's Social Work (operations) Sub-Committee held 15th September 1981, Appendix B, p. 3; the report was a supplement to a large publication entitled Strathclyde's Children

<sup>517</sup> Strathclyde Regional Council, 'Room to Grow': Report of a special officer/member group of the council's social work committee on child care in Strathclyde, Report and Discussion, November 1979, p. 16. [first published in an abridged form in 1978]

<sup>518</sup> See Robert Holman, (1975) 'The Place of Fostering in Social Work', The British Journal of Social Work Vol. 5(1), pp. 3–29.

flexibility in council housing policy, inadequate allowances paid to foster carers, and even the alleged nature of recruitment campaigns that some regions within Strathclyde felt were 'directed to middle class values and the glamorous presentation of fostering which seemed unrelated to peoples [sic] true experience and the real needs of Children'.<sup>519</sup> Regardless of difficulties, where it was judged that children would not be able to return home over the long term, authorities such as Strathclyde still favoured foster care over residential care. The 'Room to Grow' report ended its discussion of foster care by recommending that 'family care should be developed so that it becomes available to any child who requires it'.<sup>520</sup>

### Recruitment of Foster Parents

Around 1976, Strathclyde produced guidelines for the recruitment of foster carers. This nine page document outlines the policies and safeguards that were to be put in place in order to ensure children's safety and promote successful recruitment and placements. The guidelines stress that 'foster parents are a scarce and valuable resource of a Social Work department' and that those who approached to offer their services should be met with 'efficient and courteous procedures'.<sup>521</sup> Social workers were told that prospective candidates should not be met with form filling until they had been allowed 'ample opportunities for general discussions on fostering and are certain in their own minds that they wish to proceed'.<sup>522</sup>

The process was now considerably more rigorous than in the days where a potential foster parent could send a letter and submit a couple of testimonials. From start to final agreement, 19 separate, standard documents might be used, countless visits by social workers made, report writing and information gathering that were all part of the application process had to be completed, and a selection and placement procedure followed, which might involve assessment by a foster care panel.<sup>523</sup> A police enquiry was made and this had to be administered by a social work manager.<sup>524</sup> A medical report from the candidate's doctor was obtained, two

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<sup>519</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid. p. 23; cited in the full report published in November 1979.

<sup>521</sup> GCA, SR27/5/2/54 (1974-78): 'Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department: Fostercare—Notes of Guidance on Procedure' (no date-likely 1976), p. 1.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid.

<sup>523</sup> Not all areas used panels, but they were in use within some divisions within Strathclyde to assess the suitability of people applying to foster or adopt. It was recommended that the panel have not fewer than 3 members including the social worker making the assessment and a senior member of social work staff, see 'Fostercare—Notes of Guidance', p. 8.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

references were gathered (one to be from an unrelated person) and these referees might be interviewed. If an applicant was selected as suitable, a file was kept of all these details. As we have noted, regulations also dictated a minimum level of ongoing monitoring and the guidelines issued reminded social workers of this and that 'assessment is a continuing process'.<sup>525</sup>

Yet even with all this rigour and necessary bureaucracy, a randomness did characterise the organisation of the system when it came to placing children with the right family. This had to do with the nature of allocations at the level of regions, divisions and area levels, and the information sharing that might, or might not, go on between these administrative structures. Strathclyde's policy was that foster parents should come from within the boundaries of the region, but in this case the region was very large with numerous divisions, and within some divisions such as Glasgow, multiple area offices. While divisions recruited their own pool of foster parents, particularly for short-term care, if a child could not be found a home from within this, or needed long-term care, there were procedures for accessing 'resource exchange' between divisions. The situation became even more complicated where applications and searches for foster families crossed regional boundaries.

The whole process was resource intensive at a time when social work departments were regularly under-staffed. In addition, as we will see in the case study for Child H, voluntary organisations might also be involved. The whole process could take so long that children might outgrow the wait, and/or, potential foster carers would give up their commitment. Aware of these complications, the guidelines counselled that:

Potential foster parents can lose interest and enthusiasm if kept waiting too long for a child. Their circumstances can also change so much that their application would require to be re-assessed. Social Workers should also try to resist the pressures of finding places for children by using approved long term foster parents temporarily for short term placements for which they are not really suited. This can result in foster parents and children having bad experiences of fostering and may lead to the foster parents' subsequent withdrawal. In extreme cases, both foster parents and children can be put at risk...It is wasteful of scarce resources if potential foster parents are kept waiting for a long period of time for a suitable child if their services might be used elsewhere. The Social Worker responsible for continuing work with approved foster parents should therefore discuss with Area Officer or delegated senior whether details of foster parents should be registered at Division for possible matching with child from another

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<sup>525</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

area. There is a registration form (DRFp) for this purpose...The Divisional Registration System for exchange of resources applies for medium or long term fostercare or adoption of older or "hard to place" children but *not to short term* placements.<sup>526</sup>

This whole system involved more form filling and discussions between social workers in different locations, and the same again with respective line managers.

Local authorities had learned some lessons from things that had gone wrong in the past and were aware of the many pitfalls of selection and placement. They tried to circumvent these with checks and visits, and assessments and reviews. However, this was a very labour-intensive business. In the end, the success or otherwise of many foster placements came down to the regular nemesis of social work authorities—experienced, knowledgeable staff, or rather, in some cases, the lack of them.

The issue of direct childcare experience is also relevant in respect of social work departments. In 1978, CAS organised a 'Workshop' party to discuss fostering.<sup>527</sup> This was attended by three members of CAS and fourteen senior social workers from across Scotland, though pointedly across the whole process, three of this number left the group before its work was completed (two because they left their employment and one woman retired). The discussions were written up by participants and subsequently published. The booklet was distributed within social work offices in Scotland and is, in a sense, more interesting because of what it unwittingly tells us about the nature of social work, than for what it reveals about fostering practices.<sup>528</sup> In one section of the booklet it is commented that although prior to 1968 most people working in this area were not qualified 'they learned through experience' and as their numbers were small, they had closer working relationships with colleagues in

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<sup>526</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>527</sup> This initiative was a consequence of the publication and distribution of an official publication entitled *Foster Care—a Guide to Practice* (London: HMSO, 1976); following the issue of this publication, CAS ran several seminars and eventually formed the workshop party to further address fostering practices in Scotland.

<sup>528</sup> NRS ED11/630: *Boarding Out: Fostering Workshops; 'Foster Care for Children: Report of a "Workshop" on selected topics arranged by the Central Advisory Service of Social Work Services Group between March and September 1978'*. CAS were at pains in the introduction to this report to state that it had been edited, and that not all the views expressed were shared by everyone involved, or held by CAS—it is quite likely that views expressed by participants that were thought very problematic were edited out (pp. 1-2 of report and see also a minute by one of the CAS participants, John Smith, dated 23 October 1979). Unfortunately we do not have an unedited versions of the papers submitted by contributors.

children's homes and 'discussion and decision making was at informal level'; post 1968 the situation was totally different with:

...the increased number of social workers involved, the varied nature of their work and resultant lack of experience in fostering has, coupled with a high rate of breakdown and conclusions reached in research work, drawn attention to the need to develop the team approach in caring and placement and to formalise systems of working...<sup>529</sup>

Acknowledgment that many case workers were inexperienced and had little knowledge about foster care, and the fact that this contributed to breakdowns when poor decisions were made, ushered in the world of the generic social worker, the specialist foster care advisor and in large divisions, even specialist teams dedicated to fostering. By the 1980s, these had become established practices.

In Strathclyde region, in 1985, a handbook on fostering was published.<sup>530</sup> While its predecessor had been somewhat flimsy and ran to a mere nine pages, this massive tome runs to 166 pages and is indicative of how administratively heavy social work procedure had become. The handbook offers explanation and description of current policy and functioned as a set of guidelines. It was distributed to all social workers then in employment in Strathclyde. While bringing together existing policy and procedures into one handbook, it also claimed to introduce some new ones. These are described as 'all fostering assessments being presented to Adoption and Fostering Panels; the role of the link worker; a written report on every placement; Foster Home Reviews and further rights of Appeal'.<sup>531</sup> It also contained copies of all 30 sample forms involved in the process of placement of children in foster homes.

The whole recruitment and placement business was conducted much more professionally by this time. A range of promotional material and formats was used: newspaper articles, promotional leaflets, TV and radio advertisements and programmes. Public meetings were also held and at these, it was thought a good thing to have existing foster parents attend. All divisions held monthly 'open' meetings.<sup>532</sup> Section 2.2 of the *Fostering Guidelines* talks about the assessment of candidates looking to become foster carers and states 'the concept of "vetting" applicants has been superseded by the more helpful process of assessment and

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<sup>529</sup> Ibid., 'Foster care for Children', p. 26

<sup>530</sup> GCA, SR1/2/101: Fostering Guidelines (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1985).

<sup>531</sup> Ibid., Fostering Guidelines, 'Foreword by F. E. Edwards, Director of Social Work', p. 3.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

preparation of applicants'. Just how bureaucratic the process had become, particularly in a large region such as Strathclyde, is clear in this section.<sup>533</sup> The local social work department was no longer a one-stop shop for social welfare. The protection of children put up for fostering was now the domain of specialists.<sup>534</sup>

When the *Room to Grow* report was being prepared in the late 1970s, a sub-group of the report's larger assembly of investigators looked in detail at fostering and adoption using information obtained from five of Strathclyde region's 'divisions'.<sup>535</sup> Of these, two admitted that visits to foster homes in their division did not meet the minimum statutory requirements (for three-monthly visits); in the other three areas, it was stated that although this minimum could be met, this standard was not enough to ensure good support of families and the protection of children. Moreover, maintaining even the minimum was constantly challenged by staff shortages. At the level of social work management, a haphazard system seemed to prevail:

The monitoring of visits was on the whole left to each Area Officer with District and Advisors having no effective controls. However two Districts were using panels to review Foster cases involving foster parents and children. Another Division expressed concern about the large number of children placed outwith the Region where other authorities have refused to accept supervision of these cases. This involved fieldwork staff in a time-consuming exercise of distant visiting. The methods of supervision employed to ensure adequate visiting and support are fragmented and there is a need to clarify management responsibilities. This will be time consuming but there should be no short cuts to each child's needs being understood and met. This must involve children and their carers in reviews and decision making for their future.<sup>536</sup>

It was acknowledged at the time that failures in foster placements could have very negative consequences for children; in response, Strathclyde did give thought to

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<sup>533</sup> Ibid., pp. 17-45.

<sup>534</sup> Regrettably, we have not been able to provide a case study of a child fostered in this period owing to the inability to identify such cases in the Strathclyde case files.

<sup>535</sup> Strathclyde covered a huge and diverse area within Scotland; the region was split geographically into administrative districts and depending on their size, each of the districts might be further split into divisions of individual districts—there were 19 divisions in all within Strathclyde. It should be noted however, that the city of Glasgow formed a single division. The five divisions involved in the study are not named but are thought to have been broadly representative of different types of communities from across the region.

<sup>536</sup> Room to Grow Report, p. 17.



different types of foster care and to careful matching of children with suitable families—if and when they could find them.

## Residential Care: Overview

A few months ahead of the Social Work Act coming into law, Glasgow had care of a little under 900 children housed in residential homes or hostels. Here we have a mixed picture of children in Corporation-run Homes and some boarded out to Homes in the voluntary sector. The facilities involved, together with the numbers of children in this type of care, are outlined below.

Children in Corporation Residential Homes as at 31st May 1968: <sup>537</sup>

Residential Home	Girls	Boys	Total
<b>Auldhouse (School age boys)</b>		23	23
<b>Blairvadach &amp; Eda Yarrow, Rhu (Babies and toddlers)</b>	45	18	63
<b>Castlemilk (Reception Unit) (mixed all ages)</b>	31	31	62

In these details we see that two decades after the Children Act, and despite calls to end this, many young children were still being looked after in totally separate residential nurseries and some homes were still sex-segregated. An increased level of specialism had emerged: Glasgow ran several homes for children deemed ‘mentally handicapped’.<sup>538</sup>

Even with the ambition to keep families together, the need for residential care for some children—increasingly children with special needs—remained. Moreover, a demand for such residential places would continue. As was predicted by the Scottish Office, however, local authorities were under-resourced in this area.<sup>539</sup> Glasgow did manage to accommodate a sizeable number in their own homes, but these were

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<sup>537</sup> Glasgow Children’s Department Nineteenth Annual Report, 1967-68, p. 20.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

<sup>539</sup> See NRS ED11/849: Local Authority Children’s Homes Administration: Research into Local Authorities Children’s Homes.

never enough. Accordingly, the city made use of homes run by voluntary organisations. In 1968, Glasgow children were located in the following voluntary-run establishments:

**CHILDREN IN VOLUNTARY HOMES as at 31st May 1968:**

	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
Smyllum Park, Lanark	10	19	29
Convent of the Good Shepherd, Colinton		9	9
St. Ninian's House of Falkland, Fife	7		7
Nazareth House, Cardonald	12	17	29
Nazareth House, Aberdeen	16	15	31
Nazareth House, Lasswade	4	1	5
Mugdock Convalescent Home	8	7	15
Quarrier's Homes, Bridge of Weir	66	59	125
Nazareth House, Kilmarnock	11	10	21
Other Homes	24	32	56
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	<b>158</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>327</b>

Extracted from: *Glasgow Children's Department: Nineteenth Annual Report, 1967-1968*, p.20.

It was estimated that across Scotland, of children in the care of local authorities who were placed in residential homes, 'up to 1970 about 50% of all places were in establishments run by voluntary organisations.'<sup>540</sup> This is one reason why large institutions in out-of-the-way locations such as Quarrier's Homes were still open; though others, such as Aberlour Orphanage in Moray had recognised that this type of facility no longer met modern childcare standards and moved to providing care in small, mixed-sex homes, closing the orphanage in the 1960s.<sup>541</sup> The closure of other such facilities run by Roman Catholic orders followed. Local authorities continued to use voluntary homes such as Smyllum during the 1970s, but they did so when they felt they had no other choice.

Increasingly, throughout the 1970s, pressure was brought to bear on the voluntary sector to diversify and develop dedicated specialist services rather than continue with

<sup>540</sup> 'Room to Grow' Report, p. 40.

<sup>541</sup> The shift in policy was presaged by inspection reports in the 1940s. NRS ED11/443 Voluntary Homes. Annual Returns etc.: Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour, Banffshire: 1933-1955, departmental minute dated 17 October 1947. Home Department minute dated 24 December 1948, recounting findings from a recent visit of inspection.

mainstream children's homes. Homes run by Barnardo's in Scotland had been in the vanguard of this shift, changing the remit of some of their conventional homes—such as Blackford Brae in Edinburgh—to become a home for what was termed 'maladjusted' children in 1967.<sup>542</sup> Often these youngsters had experienced failed foster placements. Barnardo's also ran a residential school, Craigerne near Peebles. Opened in 1956, this also catered for so-called 'difficult' children.<sup>543</sup>

Despite continuing efforts to find foster families and a will to make this the preferred method of care, either short or long term, in Glasgow, the numbers of children requiring residential care climbed throughout the early 1970s—although with overspill policies in place, the population of the city was actually falling. By 1975, around 900 children were placed in voluntary homes and some 692 in the city's own residential provision.<sup>544</sup> It was acknowledged that an 'archaic' system involving segregation by age and sex was still prevalent, and the buildings in use were ill-suited—often old villas in residential areas where children were not well integrated within these communities.<sup>545</sup>

The experiences of children in different types of residential care will be examined through discussion of findings from reports conducted in Glasgow, and case studies, beginning with the case of a child placed in a local authority children's home long term.

### **Case Study XIII: Child G<sup>546</sup>**

This is a case of a child who was taken into care in 1970 in Glasgow because of the mother's illness, and who experienced a series of placements, eventually ending up in long term residential care. While the child was still at home there were indications that Child G may have been abused by the mother's partner.

In August 1971, social work received a phone call from a nurse at the education department who reported that Child G had allegedly 'been taken away by a man in a

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<sup>542</sup> See NRS ED11/664/2: Voluntary Homes, Inspectors' Reports: Dr Barnardo's Blackford Brae; Inspection Report dated 10 April 1967.

<sup>543</sup> See NRS ED11/715/2: Voluntary Homes, Inspectors' Reports: Dr Barnardo's Tyneholm House Pencaitland; summary of Barnardo's homes prepared by Barbara C. Reed (likely an advisor for the Scottish Office Central Advisory Service), no date c. late 1960s.

<sup>544</sup> GCA, SR27/1/1: The Corporation of Glasgow Review of Social Work Department (Phase II), Appendix D, p. 32.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>546</sup> GCA SWD-SW4, Box no.3 (collection: 1730, box 3). CLOSED FILE.

car'. It was further reported that the mother had taken the child to a doctor when the child returned home after this incident, and checks revealed that the child 'was found to be intact but bruised. Sr.X averred that the child's mother said nothing about her co-habitation...' A social worker visited but there was nobody at the family home. Further visits were prompted only by reports of an older sibling's truancy. The mother's partner was not in the home initially and the mother stated that she had washed her hands of him as he was 'cruel to herself and the children'. There was enough anxiety about the family for the social worker to make repeated visits—every few weeks—throughout 1972 and into spring 1973. At which point the oldest child was sent to a List D school because of ongoing, persistent truancy.

On some of the visits the mother's partner was in residence and on others not. When the latter the mother always claimed that the relationship was finished for good. The social worker evidently took a close interest in the family and indeed, with the mother, accompanied the older sibling who was sent to the List D facility when admission to the school took place. On return to the family home after this journey, the mother revealed to the social worker that:

...her former paramour had 'interfered' with her young child [child H]. She brought the child into the room &...related how ----- had invited [the child] to handle his 'private part' & he had done the same to [the child]...There is a suggestion that the [the child] was bleeding.

I told Mrs ----- to take [the child] to the doctor but as the occurrences took place some two months ago I doubted if much could be done about the offence. However the doctor may have more positive guidance to offer. I counselled Mrs ----- AGAINST any further involvement with ----- & also advised her to allow the child to forget the incident after [being] seen by the doctor. Mrs ----- evidently learned about this incident through a friend in whom the child had confided.

Two months later child H and a sibling were placed in foster care in a different county when the mother was hospitalised. This placement did not last very long although no reason is stated why, and the children were soon removed to Quarrier's Homes. The mother signed herself out of hospital at this juncture. Further social work visits were made while the children remained in residential care and the mother's 'paramour' was still in residence. The children were returned home following a request from Quarrier's for their removal. This does not seem to have been made because of any problem with the children—they were reported to be well behaved

when with Quarrier's. Their stay there was only for a few weeks and it is possible Quarrier's no longer had capacity. There are no further entries for these children until 1976.

Child G was admitted to a Glasgow District Council children's home in the summer of 1976 under Section 15 of the Social Work Act. At this time, the child was attending a centre for remedial education in the city and was removed from there to a nearby Health Centre for a medical examination, and from there to the children's home by an RSSPCC officer. No reason for this is stated in the file but it appears to have been once again because of the mother's ill health and hospitalisation. The mother died in the autumn of that year and Child G, by now 14-years old, remained at the children's home where the child's great unhappiness is recorded in detail. The case worker noted that:

The child's mother has recently died & it now becomes a long-term case. It is a case which warrants a full case conference as I am of the opinion that a fostering placement may well be indicated. The child is obviously seeking reassurance & is fearful of the future...

This children's home was one of several operated by the City Council. A new case worker was appointed to the child at this point, but the original social worker appears to have remained in contact with child H's case. From this point onwards the child was reported as disruptive, was 'insolent and undisciplined'; an aunt had sent £5 and the child had spent this on alcohol. The child was reported as refusing to eat and had been aggressive to younger members of staff.

This established a pattern with this teenager. The case file shows little awareness by residential staff that the behaviour displayed expressed underlying distress and worry about the future and the record concentrates more on persuasion given by social workers about improving the child's behaviour. There is no record of a referral being made to see a child guidance specialist. And no mention of what, if any, disciplinary measures were instituted by staff in the home. In apparent desperation, the residential childcare staff encouraged the visits of social workers and sought help from them in dealing with child H's behaviour. While a new case worker established a good relationship with the teenager, was keenly interested in the child's welfare and made frequent visits, the child's behaviour was still erratic. Indeed, this social worker went to some lengths to help by finding out more about the family background from an acquaintance of the deceased mother. From this information it was learned that

all of the children were illegitimate, and that Child G was emotionally neglected by the mother—a factor that was ongoing for this child within the care system.

The child wished to be fostered with a family but was told it was very hard to find foster parents for teenage children. As the time came nearer for this child to leave the children's home at the requisite school-leaving age, there was once again a deterioration in behaviour. In late 1977, the usual case worker was off sick, and the previous worker took over supervision, commenting in case notes that:

This is a case where the [child] has identified closely with [the case worker]. Unfortunately [she] is off ill & ----- is missing her intensely...It is important to reassure...as much as possible in order to reduce the trauma of leaving school and leaving [the children's home] to a minimum.

During the time that this child was resident in the Home, case notes reveal there was constant conflict with the matron who made it clear to social work staff that she would prefer the child was moved elsewhere. The matron saw the child as 'a "bad influence" on the others, was losing staff for the Home and ruining [the Matron's] health'.

Case workers took the part of the child in these confrontations with residential staff, and one concluded '----- is not as BLACK as painted by Staff'. There is plentiful reason to doubt that this was a good placement for a teenager; however, case notes do not reveal any real attempt to find a community placement. Medical notes are also conspicuous by their absence, and it is likely these were kept separately—probably in residential records controlled by the Matron. Certainly, there is no indication that the issue of alleged sexual assault was ever tackled and yet the child repeatedly expressed fears about the mother's partner finding out the whereabouts of the Home.<sup>547</sup> The case worker reported that the Matron had said the child had 'always been petrified with fear of any contact with -----!' There is no indication in the file that this perpetrator was ever reported to police authorities. Moreover, there is intimation in these case records that child H avoided contact with siblings because of the risk that the man who perpetrated this assault(s) would then be able to re-establish contact.

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<sup>547</sup> Case notes reveal that this man did discover the child's residence and turned up at the Home in March 1978 in an intoxicated state. He was not allowed admittance.

At the start of 1978 the child revealed worries about what would happen when the time came to leave the Home. The Matron of the home was still determined to be rid of this teenage resident—especially once schooling was completed. Yet a school teacher had informed social work that this child was ‘still very immature...[and] should not leave school in June, but should stay on for a few months extra.’ A perfect storm ensued when the case worker who had established such a good relationship with child H decided to leave this employment and the single member of residential staff with whom the child had got along, also handed in her notice. It became evident that the child was miserable in this children’s home, but at the same time scared to leave it. The new case worker appointed was met with a renewed campaign by the Matron to evict child H; fortunately, this worker was feisty in the child’s defence.

A review of the child’s case was held at the children’s home in March 1978. This was attended by the matron, and two further members of the residential staff, a guidance teacher and the two social workers then most continuously involved in the case. The social work record states that agreement could not be given to the child being “turfed out” ...I cannot help feeling that the Home talk a lot about [child H] but I doubt their commitment...’

The new case worker appointed recorded that the child was

...full of allegations about staff... tried to be well behaved but felt that at times he was not being treated as a teenager but as a small child. From...remarks it was apparent that much of the problem had to do with the very narrow age gap between [child H] and some of the assistant house mothers who are aged 19 & 20...When I later saw two of these girls relating to ----- they did not seem to me to be handling [the teenager] very well.

A further case conference was held in summer 1978 and it was decided that the Home was not a suitable place. However, a hostel place could not be found at this time. The child continued to be in conflict with the matron (with the latter overreacting and making multiple phone calls to social work) and eating habits once again became erratic. This was described as ‘attention-seeking behaviour’.

This young person eventually moved to a hostel run by a voluntary organisation at the end of the year and was visited every two or three weeks by the case worker. After a fairly good start, things deteriorated: evidence indicates extremely poor self-care, being late for work, and refusal to attend the ‘Sunday night meetings’ in the



hostel, which seem to have been group counselling types of encounters. At one point an incident is described where child H ran out of the hostel threatening to commit suicide so that the police were called—which resulted in the distressed teenager being arrested. A night was spent in police custody followed by being admonished the next day at a Police Court, '[l]argely because of existing SW involvement'. A further charge, this time of being drunk and disorderly, followed.

The conclusion of this story after this young person left the children's home at age 16 is sad and familiar, involving another failed placement in a voluntary-run hostel, ill health, a prison sentence, and homelessness—by which point this former resident of the children's home was over 18 and Glasgow social workers seemed unable to do much to help when child H contacted them.

This case reveals much about the deficiencies within the care available to older children placed in residential homes longer term. It is very likely that younger children placed in this home were quickly moved along—either back to the family home or into foster care, and replaced with newcomers, leaving older children such as child H stranded. The environment of the children's home nurtured constant conflict and heightened anxiety for this child. The matron was unable to deal with child H's behaviour—acknowledged by social workers as arising from anxiety and unhappiness. Yet child H was not moved along.

As we have noted in Part One of this report, the quasi-medical model of care provision signalled by the appointment of registered nurses in children's homes had long been criticised.<sup>548</sup> Here we see a holdover of this system persisting into the late 1970s. This child arrived in residential care as a young teenager in emotional turmoil as evidenced by the behaviours displayed but the person in charge of residential care struggled to see this as anything other than a deliberate attempt to upset the orderly environment of the Home.

Residential homes in this mode perpetuated confrontation between residential and field staff—a battle of wills in which children became entangled. Though we cannot offer a range of comparative material, a further file examined for this study showed that because social workers in Glasgow at this time were based in area offices geographically distributed across the city, any move to another facility might have

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<sup>548</sup> See for example, Report of the Homes Committee of the Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care (Edinburgh, 1950) p. 9.

come at the price of the child having to deal with a new case worker.<sup>549</sup> This may have been part of the reasoning: or there may have been no reasoning and this allocation was simply made from social work's central office.<sup>550</sup> Field staff involved with child H did, however, provide some stability in the child's life—at least for a time—and an ear to listen: copious recording of conversations and observations is a feature of this file. However, any records kept by residential staff are missing from the file. Their views are related by the case worker, who often expressed negative opinions about the response of residential staff to this child's conduct.

While the style of recording with more thorough notes and reviews suggests progress in record keeping following the introduction of social work departments and the appointment of trained case workers, it does seem that what was written down, or not written down, was the decision of individual workers. There is no standard care plan included and little in the way of stated criteria by which to measure progress, or a lack of progress. Case notes remain impressionistic and there is no factual cataloguing of the reasoning behind many of the decisions taken for this child in this file.

Worth noting too is the frequency of visits paid to child H while in residence in the Home. They are not always at regular intervals, but generally were frequent, with at least one visit paid most months. In addition were the crisis calls: social workers sometimes did respond to the matron's demands for personal intervention but equally often, they spoke with child H on the telephone. This level of personal attention by a case worker should not be taken as typical. A study done in 1976-77 found that social workers tended to visit children placed in residential homes less frequently than those placed on supervision in the community; several reasons for this were given in the study, not least of which were the demands of 'family case work', but also the understandable reasoning that 'a child in residential care will be receiving some support from residential staff.'<sup>551</sup> Also mentioned by social workers was the practical consideration that 'residential establishments are frequently some distance [away]...' Social workers involved in the research stated that they did

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<sup>549</sup> See GCA, Box SWD-SW4: Box No.1 (collection 1730, box 4). Case file

<sup>550</sup> GCA, SR27/1/21; a review of social work done by the Operations and Methods Department of Glasgow Corporation suggests allocations were made centrally, we do not know if or when this may have changed. See The Corporation of Glasgow Review of Social Work Department (Phase II); Review conducted by O & M [Organisation and Methods] and Work Study Division, February 1975, 1st draft August 1974. Following local government reorganisation, it is likely that this form of organisation continued for some time, the O & M review recommended that it should, see p. 34.

<sup>551</sup> GCA, SR27/14/3/3/4: Children in Care – General; 'Children's Supervision Enquiry', p. 4.

increase visits to children in Homes if particular problems arose.<sup>552</sup> This does appear to have been what happened for child H.

This child's time in longer-term residential care began just ahead of the publication of Strathclyde's 'Room to Grow' report and at a time when it was acknowledged by social services in Glasgow that what was being delivered to children in care was not always adequate.<sup>553</sup> The case of child H reveals many of the reasons why that review was long overdue. The report highlighted that there was an inconsistency between residential and field workers and emphasised the level of uncertainty this caused for children in residential care.<sup>554</sup> In the case of this child, uncertainty had been a hallmark of life before coming into care, and this same emotion dominated all of the time spent in care.

### Residential Homes in Glasgow after 1968

Local authority-run children's homes, such as the one where child H spent several years, were no longer registered and inspected by representatives from the Scottish Office. This obligation had been passed to the local authority. We have seen from earlier inspection reports undertaken before this time that the culture in Homes such as this could be overly routinised, focusing on order and cleanliness over amenities that promoted a sense of comfort and security for children. Though we do not have a great deal of information about the Home where child H spent time, we do have information about similar establishments run by Glasgow.

Lochgarry Home in the west end of Glasgow took a mixed group of children and has been discussed in Part One (Section 5) of this report using information from reports of inspections conducted in the earlier part of the 1960s. In respect of Lochgarry, we also have the benefit of having one of the last surviving inspection reports undertaken by the advisors at the Scottish Office before this function at the level of central government ran out of steam. We do not know why this visit was arranged. Following a visit to Lochgarry—located in Kelvinside, Glasgow, in 1973, an advisor prepared a short summary of what she found, as follows:

The matron is Miss [X], she has been at Lochgarry for some 2 years. Previously she was at Clyde Cottage, Dunoon and prior to that she worked for Falkirk and

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<sup>552</sup> GCA, SR27-14-3-3-4: Children in Care—General; 'Children's Supervision Enquiry', p. 4.

<sup>553</sup> 'Room to Grow' Report, pp. 29-42.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

Stirling local authorities. She is NNEB trained and quite excellent in her approach to residential care.

—Miss [X] also took over a very antiquated caring regime which has taken her some time to change.

## Children

Officially this home has 30 places for girls between the ages of 0-16 and boys up to the age of about 11 years. The emphasis is on family groups—at present Miss [X] has 35 in residence and she has had 37 on occasions! She says that the pressure from Central Office to take children is quite unbearable.

She has grouped the children into 3 groups each with their own staff. The groups are located in the dormitories although they all have to share the dining room [sic] and play accommodation. There is, however, a room being converted in the semi-basement for a 'den' for the older children. The children go to a variety of local schools and the older ones come home for their mid-day lunch as Miss [X] feels she can keep a better eye on them in this way! She has one small boy of 6 who has already been excluded from 2 other day schools.

As usual this home is grossly overcrowded in the number of children but Miss [X] has made the best of a bad job by the use of bunk beds. Unlike some other homes in Glasgow it has some garden play space at the side of the house mainly suitable for the younger children; this has swings etc.

## Staffing

Miss [X] and her deputy Miss [Y] are resident and have accommodation in the former stables at the rear of the house. The rest of the staff are non-resident and of rather variable quality. We discussed the problem of whether they could be developed by the use of in-service training schemes, etc. Miss [X] certainly felt that some of them could be encouraged but some of them should never have been appointed in the first place.

I certainly felt that there was a great potential for the development of student training in this establishment. At the moment Miss [X] does not take any students because she does not have the residential accommodation for them. [...] Miss [X] separately lacks support from the Department and I think would benefit herself from contact with training courses as well as being able to offer a great deal to students. She is a very charming, attractive person who is an obvious "natural" in the work. She has a great concern for the children and it grieves her that she is not able to give them the amount of individual care they need because of the large numbers for whom she has to care.

Miss [X] is very anxious to acquire some training opportunities for her deputy Miss [Y]. In discussion it would seem that she might benefit by coming on the "violence" seminars. Needless to say Miss [X] had not heard of the seminars and obviously Glasgow Social Work Department had not circulated the information to the children's establishments. I have, therefore, sent her the details and suggested she ask Mr Nummey if Miss [Y] may be allow [sic] to apply...<sup>555</sup>

We can see from this how the wheels of change turned slowly in residential care for children. Staff turnover, overcrowding, lack of training and poor communication between the social work department and residential facilities are all writ large in the 1973 assessment.

Regardless of the new responsibilities placed on local authorities, the quality of residential care may not have been a high priority following 1968; not as high as keeping children out of Homes. Pressure not to house children in this type of care, or to keep them within this for the shortest possible time, meant stretched resources went elsewhere and such change as there was in children's homes came gradually. Meanwhile there were still many children, like child H, who required long term residential care and who felt the brunt of changed priorities by being placed within regimes that could not meet their needs. We see that at Lochgarry changes were being made to the fabric of the accommodation, but the quality and stability of staffing was still a major issue that affected the standard of care delivered—developments were much slower to improve in this respect. Overcrowding remained an issue and staff still did not have sufficient training.

We have no records from within the Strathclyde archive about either Lochgarry Home or the similar Home that accommodated child H. But we do have some information from the Glasgow City Council archives about yet another, comparable institution: Lochaber Home. In 1975, Glasgow social work received complaints about this children's home in the west of the city. A feature of Glasgow's Homes in this period is that many were based in old villas in quiet Victorian suburbs. These buildings were difficult to convert in ways that met the needs of modern standards for child care. However, they persisted as clusters of residences in areas such as

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<sup>555</sup> NRS, ED11/525/2: Glasgow: Lochgarry Home; Summary of a visit paid by an advisor, Miss B. C. Reid, dated 7 September 1973. Nummey later became deputy Director of Strathclyde Social Work Department, we do not know what his position was at this time. CLOSED FILE.

Pollokshields and Kelvinside; some of the houses were in adjoining streets and unsurprisingly, they were not always popular with other nearby residents.<sup>556</sup>

Lochaber Home in Kelvinside had something of a chequered past. Initially, it had been set up as a working boy's hostel by Glasgow Corporation. Some individual case files and an inspection file examined for this research reveal, however, that it was sometimes used as stop-gap accommodation for younger children who had lost their place in children's homes or foster care.<sup>557</sup> Similarly, older boys who had been thrown out of lodgings because of disturbed or disruptive behaviour also came to Lochaber.<sup>558</sup> In 1975, because of complaints received, Glasgow Social Work Department had agreed with local residents to change Lochaber's usage into a children's home. This was despite a general acknowledgment that the building was unsuitable for this role. In August a fire was started deliberately at the Home, and neighbours had threatened to raise court action. The fire was contained but following this the Police were brought in and wilful fire raising was established as the cause. Three children were removed to an Assessment Centre and admitted starting the fire. Representatives from the Social Work Committee visited the Home and a report was submitted to a meeting of the Committee in September. This highlighted:

a) The unsatisfactory staffing situation brought about by frequent changes of staff, inexperience of the senior staff and the fact that no senior staff were resident in the Home. A staff shift situation operated.

b) The concentration of thirty children in a terraced house, many of whom were severely disturbed and disruptive. Nine children were the subject of orders by the Children's Hearing.

It was reported that the Home had a troubled and difficult history and had been the subject of previous complaints from residents...The present head of the Home was appointed 4<sup>th</sup> July and at this date no confirmed arrangements have been made for the appointment of a Depute. There is no Third in Charge. The remaining staff consists of:

3 Houseparents

6 ½ Assistant Housefathers

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<sup>556</sup> The home where child J was placed, Lochgarry and Lochaber were all in these suburbs.

<sup>557</sup> See NRS ED11/528/2: Glasgow: Lochaber, 10 Cleveden Drive (Inspection Reports 1966-1968) and GCA, SR1/2 Box 1: Social Work Committee Lochaber Children's Home, 1975.

<sup>558</sup> See NRS ED11/528/2: Glasgow: Lochaber, 10 Cleveden Drive (Inspection Reports 1966-1968).

6 Assistant Housemothers together with cook and domestic staff

The unsettled state of the Home has been recognised by the district staff who attribute this to the extensive changes taking place from the frequent movement of children and the high turnover of staff. It was considered that Lochaber was fundamentally unsuited to be a Children's Home for the reasons that...it is a terraced house with little or no garden and totally inadequate facilities for outdoor play. To accommodate 30 children in it, with a high proportion of disturbed and delinquent children, only exacerbates the basic shortcomings.<sup>559</sup>

Of importance here was the chronic overcrowding in Homes like this and the equally chronic shortage of experienced staff. The nurses traditionally employed by Glasgow as matrons and deputies had one thing in their favour—they tended to accept the condition of residential employment and, as evidenced by inspection reports, tended to have a little more staying power. The slow move towards abandoning this model of employment reflected this. By the mid-1970s, although some matrons remained in post, they were being replaced when they left or retired with officers-in-charge who had either the Residential Child Care Certificate or were qualified nursery nurses. As we see in the example of Lochaber, the requirement to live-in seems also to have been abandoned when necessary.

The committee's representatives met with neighbours and heard once again a litany of complaints about vandalism and noise. These issues were acknowledged, and an undertaking given about 'long-term plans for the establishment' which included reducing the number of children and transferring those who were particularly disruptive; increasing supervision and control 'whilst retaining sympathy, a sense of caring and an understanding of their difficulties'; improving staff accommodation, recruiting more mature and experienced staff.<sup>560</sup>

Beyond case files, and since inspection reports are scarce for this period, individual records that might provide some insights into what life was like for children in residential care are few. However, within the archive of material relating to children's homes in Glasgow are a series of log books for Eversley Home.<sup>561</sup> This home is reviewed briefly in Case Study XI in Part One of this report. Scottish Office inspection reports indicate that throughout the 1960s Eversley presented a bleak picture in

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<sup>559</sup> GCA, Strathclyde Regional Council Records, File ref: SR1/2 Box 1, September 1975; Social Work Committee: Lochaber Children's Home, 10 Clevedon Drive, Glasgow, by Director of Social work, 16 September 1975, p. 1.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>561</sup> GCA, SR27/14/2/1/1-4: Eversley Children's Home—Log Books, 1970-1981.



which children were physically well-cared for, but deprived in terms of their emotional and educational wellbeing. It was a consistently overcrowded and understaffed environment.<sup>562</sup>

Log Books that cover the 1970s catalogue the number of children in the Home, daily comings and goings of children, visitors to the home, attendance at church and Sunday Schools, any exceptional events, and, very occasionally, punishments meted out to children. In 1970, the entries in the log book are generally short. For example:

Monday 9 February 1970

Five girls at Brownies this evening

Miss Somers gave older girls extra tutorials

Dr Kennedy visited this morning

■ at Speech Therapy to-day

■ admitted to E.U. 12.30

■ discharged from E.U. to foster parents

Two ■ children discharged to Winton Drive [children's home]

No of Children in the Home—39

No of Children in E.U.—6

Total No of Children—45.<sup>563</sup>

The 'EU' seems to have functioned as an emergency admission unit within the home. Eversley was still headed by a Matron. A visit from the Home's medical practitioner was a regular occurrence. There were no children admitted that day, but as we can see, a few children were discharged. Generally, there is only one entry per day—most similar to the above—but on this day an additional entry was added:

Monday 9 February 1970

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<sup>562</sup> See NRS ED11/525/2: Glasgow: Eversley Children's Home; inspection reports.

<sup>563</sup> GCA, SR27/14/2/1/1: entry 9 February 1970; note the full names of children have not been replicated here.

■■■ punished by Matron for throwing cups of water on a child's bed, also for telling lies. The punishment was witnessed by three senior staff members. M. Smith (Sister) & I. Gibson.<sup>564</sup>

This is unusual in the log where no further entries indicating punishment are noted for the remainder of 1970. The fact that it is recorded and stated to have been witnessed, indicates that this was probably corporal punishment. Of note is that a 1967 inspection report for this home noted that corporal punishment was not used.<sup>565</sup> Within entries for 1970 overall, some general characteristics of the home can be seen:

- The number of children resident hovers between 40 and 50, usually around the mid-40s; and many of the children were sibling groups.
- Transfers to other homes as well as to foster parents are routine. This included occasional transfers to Roman Catholic homes and to Quarrier's, as well as to other Corporation-run homes.
- Children attending Child Guidance clinics and the likes of speech therapy are fairly regular weekly entries.
- Though it is difficult to tell for sure, as the visitors' relationship to the children is not described, from entries there appears to have been a befriending service and these types of visits are quite common, including when the adult takes the child out. Some visitors may have been prospective foster parents. Both male and female adults are mentioned. Occasionally, voluntary work by students is mentioned (escorting children to swimming baths and the like).
- Routine medical matters are included such as medical appointments and regular visits by a doctor (presumably the Home's MOH).
- Visits to parents were common, including with overnight stays. Sometimes the parents visited the home. The failure of parents to visit as promised is also recorded.
- There are many instances of children admitted late at night/early hours to the E.U. and discharged the next afternoon.
- During July, all the children staying in the home longer-term had a 2-week caravan holiday at Culzean.
- All children attended either church or Sunday School every week.

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<sup>564</sup> Ibid.

<sup>565</sup> See NRS ED11/525/2: Glasgow: Eversley Children's Home; inspection report, 1967.

- There is occasional note of children failing to return from school, or similarly absconding during or after school. Generally, they have made their way to a relative's house and are easily found.
- Visits from councillors are recorded; these are infrequent.

By the mid-1970s a matron was still in post and the numbers of children had been reduced to around 38, but the general life of the Home as recorded in these entries is much the same: parents and friends visit, the MOH comes in weekly, all children attend church on Sunday and episodes of children absconding for short periods occur regularly.<sup>566</sup>

By the end of the decade however, and the start of the 1980s (the Home closed at the end of 1981), there is a more drastic reduction in numbers to around 20 children and a 'House' system appears to have been instituted suggesting that children have been split into family-sized groups. There is no further mention of church attendance and no mention of a matron in charge; some details suggest that children tend to be older. For example:

Monday 8th June 1981

■■■■ went to Job Centre with Ann Marie, has an appointment for Friday.

■■■■ to Douglas Inch [psychiatric clinic] with Bernie.

■■■■ to caravan with John Marshall<sup>567</sup> on return sleeping in flat.

■■■■ to Amandas [sic] this evening.

■■■■ & Bernie went to Motherwell with ■■■■ this afternoon. ■■■■ is staying for 4 weeks.

■■■■ went with Ann Marie to visit ■■■■ in hospital this evening.

■■■■ to visit Dad after tea.

■■■■ sisters ■■■■ visited this evening

■■■■ called to see ■■■■ tonight but she was [?not] home from work.

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<sup>566</sup> GCA, SR27/14/2/1/3 entries for 1977.

<sup>567</sup> [Note: this may be the J. Marshall later convicted of sexual assault of young people in his care at Eversley].

No of children present in the home—16

No of girls in hospital—1

No of children on visits—1

No of girls in T/Unit—3

Total No of Children— 21.<sup>568</sup>

Overall, the style of language used is less medically orientated and more informal in tone; there is a great deal of coming and going and more interaction with people from outside the home. The establishment of formal case reviews is very evident, with different social workers in charge of individual children attending these, as is the fact that parents might be invited to attend these. Attendance at church (if this happened) is no longer recorded. On the other hand, there is a similar lack of detail on issues like discipline. There is recording of events that meant the police had to be called for various issues such as absconding by children and instances of glue sniffing. Mention of the 'T/Unit' implies some sort of wing for a small number of children accommodated in the Home. It is unclear what the nature of this was, but it might have been a training unit for older children due to leave care.<sup>569</sup> The general impression of the Home is one of a busy, noisy residence, with many people and children coming and going throughout the week. Generally, there is a lot more descriptive content regarding children misbehaving and the challenges this presented, all of which suggests children with very complex needs were being admitted to homes as in the following example:

Saturday 17th October 1981

■■■■ obtained a tube of glue at some time today, as soon as we came back from Community Centre she started the pattern of behaviour as last Sunday. Cursing at staff, banging doors, windows etc. Refused to eat and would not stay in her own unit. She unravelled the fire hose, and trapped 3 houseparents in R/vale kitchen, soaked carpet and gave us such aggravation that I phoned Mr D Thompson and told him the trouble we were having. He advised me to phone the Police and ask them if they could do anything about her disruptive behaviour. Police came, but all they could do was talk to her and stay with us until she simmered down. ■■■■ would not promise to end her behaviour. So I called Mr H. Baxter and said that we were having a repeat of last w/end. He called

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<sup>568</sup> GCA, SR27/14/2/1/4: entries for 1979-81; entry for 8 June 1981.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid.



stand by and told a duty SW Mr D. Crispp to come out and speak to ■ he also told Mr Crispp that if he found it necessary to try and admit ■ to an assessment centre until Monday, until she returns to St Euphrasia's. ■ was taken to office at 9.45 pm by Mr Crispp she is now in Robertson Ass/Centre until Monday. Mr Baxter informed.<sup>570</sup>

Here we see the involvement of social workers as essentially on call by telephone. Social workers, as we have seen, tended to place a lower priority on children in residential care as compared to the weight of other types of cases. Children's Hearings were embedded in the system by the time of local government reorganisation in 1976, which added to workloads.

In 1976-7 a study was conducted on visiting by social workers of children placed in care. This explored types of caseloads in seven area offices in different parts of Strathclyde.<sup>571</sup> While children were no longer being sent to residential schools to become the sole problem of the school and its own teaching, residential and field workers, the additional workload placed on local authority case workers who had to liaise with reporters, often escort children to hearings and to the school, compile reports for the panel that involved contacting multiple other medical and educational professionals, increased hugely. The following table illustrates findings in the seven areas:

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<sup>570</sup> Ibid., entry for 17 October 1981.

<sup>571</sup> GCA, SR27-14-3-3-4: Children in Care—General; 'Children's Supervision Enquiry', Table 1.

AREA TEAM	Total Caseload	Children's Hearing Cases			% Caseload re Children's Hearing Cases
		Basic	Residential	Total	
<b>G3, Glasgow Division</b>	337	29	17	46	13.6%
<b>SW1, Glasgow Division</b>	407	95	34	129	26.5%
<b>Johnstone, Renfrew Division</b>	532	77	12	89	16.7%
<b>Dumbarton, Argyll/Dumbarton</b>	352	55	30	85	24.1%
<b>Lanark, Lanark Division</b>	331	34	16	50	15.1%
<b>North Motherwell, Lanark Division</b>	414	33	19	52	12.6%
<b>Saltcoats, Ayr Division</b>	447	52	11	63	14.1%

Of the children on residential placements most would be found in mainstream children's homes; but where it was thought necessary for the child's welfare to make a residential placement that also included schooling or training, the option was now for a List D situation. The following case study explores the experience of one child where this was thought preferable.

## Case Study XIX: Child H<sup>572</sup>

This child was first referred to Glasgow social work department in 1977 aged 12 having been in trouble for glue-sniffing. The family background was troubled—the parents separated when Child H was a baby and the mother later abandoned this toddler and a sibling who by then, had both suffered significant neglect and abuse. The child's father was sent to prison for a serious offence and Child H's early childhood thereafter was spent with grandparents. The father would be incarcerated repeatedly throughout the child's early life. But after one release, Child H's father formed another relationship and so the child was returned to parental care.

All was not well from this time: Child H began truanting as well as becoming involved with solvent abuse and theft. The Social Worker's initial assessment of the child was sympathetic, stating that here was 'a very nervous' child 'with a very pallid complexion for whom I felt distinctly sorry'. The worker felt that Child H had 'suffered from the insecurity' of an upbringing that involved the loss of a mother at 'a crucial stage' in early life, and that this had affected the child's development. The assessment goes on to record that 'Mr and Mrs -----also expressed great concern at [the child's] behaviour in general terms' stating the child seemed to be cut-off from reality a lot of the time: 'living in a completely different world and paying little attention to what is going on...completely withdraws...so that no one can penetrate' this 'defensive barrier'. The social worker concluded with the view that the child was 'withdrawn, uncommunicative, is a persistent liar and truants in addition to becoming involved with the police' but that none of this behaviour was 'malicious'. Instead it 'testifies to maladjustment in certain areas... If this can be more thoroughly investigated, then a more appropriate form of treatment can be sought after, involving child guidance and perhaps child psychiatry.'

In handwritten notes on the file the social worker opened, it is recorded that the father used corporal punishment when Child H did not come home on time at night. In the opinion of the social worker, the child was probably 'slightly afraid' of the father 'who [wa]s so anxious to discipline'. The case worker found the child talkative and relaxed away from the parental home, and ascertained a close relationship existed with the grandmother (who brought the child up until the age of seven).

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<sup>572</sup> GCA, SWD-SW4: Box No. 3 [collection: 1730, box 3] File ref: Reg no.: C3/25/78. [REDACTED]



Child guidance had been considered but was deemed to be unnecessary and the case was closed in the spring of 1978.

It was reopened in the winter of that year after another appearance at a Children's Hearing. At this, it was decided that Child H should be placed under a residential supervision order and the child was referred to a List D School run by a voluntary provider at some distance from Glasgow. This establishment was far enough away to prevent the child from returning to old haunts too regularly, but not so far that it cut off contact with the family. A letter from this school a few weeks later asks for all background reports to be sent to them so that 'they can assess whether this school is best suited to -----'s needs.' It is clear that this is a proforma letter, which requests information about the child to include the following where applicable:

Details of present referrals

Details of past referrals

Psychiatric Report

Educational Psychologist Report

Child Guidance Report

Any important Medical Report

School Reports and Absences

Assessment Centre Report

Absences from home, hospitalisation, abscondings etc.'

Relevant documents were despatched to the school days later by a different social worker now appointed to this case.

The social worker made several telephone calls and visits to Child H's home following appearance at the Hearing and while awaiting a place at a List D school as the child repeatedly ran away from home, often staying out overnight sleeping rough. A duty social worker recording form states that early in 1979, on the day this child was due to be taken to the school, there was a delay because of bad weather and the child once again absconded, being picked up by local police in the late afternoon when a 'place of safety order' was made. Child H was sent to an Assessment Centre run by Glasgow Council and transferred from there to the school the following week. A

letter from the school to the father and stepmother, soon afterwards, records that the child had absconded from the school along with five others. They were apprehended after an incident of theft. Child H was referred once again to the Children's Panel in respect of this offence. Other correspondence records that the child was allowed home at weekends and travelled alone by bus to Glasgow.

An initial review done by the school about a month later and sent to social work is in the file. This is a one-page proforma and provides little detail. Select transcription as follows: regarding the child's general attitude and behaviour: '[s]eems happy...and is accepting it in the right spirit.' In respect of relationships with others these were: '[s]atisfactory. Accepted quite well by peers—popular. Doesn't take too kindly to correction.' It records a 'fainting fit' for which a medical referral was made. And that the child had been going home and coming back to school 'without fail' after weekend leave. The school viewed the family, at this point, as supportive. This review ends by stating that it is hoped Child H will benefit from being at the school.

Meantime it is clear from documentation in the file that in view of another upcoming attendance at the hearings because of the episode of theft, the Glasgow case worker remained in contact with the family. Through this contact it was learned that the father's partner had left because of domestic violence. The social worker related this information to the Reporter as well as information from the school that intimated that Child H was not a ringleader in this spree, and it was decided therefore to remit another attendance at a Hearing.

Child H remained at the school, although was frequently encouraged to spend weekends and holidays at home in Glasgow. These sometimes ended with overnight absconding and getting into trouble of various types—at the end of 1979 Child H was arrested for theft and taken to another Assessment Centre for the weekend before being sent back to the List D establishment. Accordingly, the Children's Hearing renewed the residential order. By the following summer it was decided that the school had done all it could for Child H, generally the stay there was considered to have been beneficial and discharge was considered. At this point in the file, we do have evidence of the child's opinions being expressed and listened to; and the head teacher of the school records insights into the child's personality. The child was ambivalent about the decision to return home—alternately insisting on this, then equally emphatically demurring—and demanding that if return was to happen, attendance at a List D establishment in Glasgow was non-negotiable: the child seemed to anticipate a low likelihood of staying on the straight and narrow if returned to mainstream education. Investigations were made, but a suitable List D

place in Glasgow that met requirements in terms of religion and educational needs could not be found.<sup>573</sup>

Whilst the social worker concluded that it was family circumstances that prompted escalations of the child's misbehaviour and emotional upset, regardless, contact with home was maintained. Whilst in the List D school, Child H was provided with structure and security and a transition to working life. There is no indication in this file that the teenager had significant problems at the school; no complaints were raised by the child or anyone else involved with the case about the time spent there. The child's home life in a council house in an inner-city area was overcrowded (more children had been born). Whatever the child may have said about wanting to return home was soon contradicted through behaviour: as soon as any possibility of going home permanently was discussed, the child's conduct again deteriorated. Attempts to return the child home were quickly abandoned and the headmaster noted: 'it was felt that -----'s social and academic life would be best served by...remaining here...until...sixteen years of age'.

Transitional arrangements were made for the child at the school—where living accommodation was provided in separate units—each under the charge of a houseparent. When the time came near, Child H was moved to a unit that facilitated skills in independent living, and workplace experience was found at a local business at which the young person seemed to perform well. Child H remained in the residential school until 17 years of age, but the child's educational attainment remained 'remedial'. In the final months spent at the school, weekend visits home proved uneventful as the child's father was once again in prison and Child H often stayed with grandparents.

Throughout the time spent at the school, this child's case was reviewed regularly, including within the school and by the children's panel. When Child H was eventually discharged from supervision, case notes reveal that unskilled work and accommodation in the Highlands was found. The local authority case worker commented that this move was significant—for Child H had no wish to be at home, especially since the violent father was once again released from prison.

Further documentation reveals that this young person must have returned to Glasgow—the type of employment undertaken was insecure—though the precise

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<sup>573</sup> Strathclyde Regional Council, Residential Child Care Strategy for the Eighties: Home or Away?, p. 41.

reason for the return is not specified; being thrown out of the family home and consigned to life in a homeless unit was the result. The social worker involved tried to reconnect with this family but found that in the interim, they had 'done a moonlight'. Child H did not return to the family but drifted into substance abuse and criminal activity ending with a prison sentence.

This case concerns a child who, to some extent, seems to have benefitted from being sent away to a List D School. Yet the issues with the family were insurmountable where the childcare system of the time was concerned. The will to keep children in close contact with families almost certainly backfired in the case of this child—the family home was the problem, and however caring, this school ultimately failed to overcome other deficiencies that dominated this child's life. Moreover, the school was unable to overcome this child's disadvantaged schooling and elevate educational achievements to a more functional level that might have made stable employment a possibility. When the school could do no more, Child H ended up in insecure, low skilled and low-paid work, far from social contacts, and without any kind of permanent residence or the means to gain one.

A later item in this file records a statement made by the young person in which it is recalled that the time spent at the List D school was a positive experience—better than any other life experiences encountered in this person's life to that date. The systems in place to protect the welfare of such children and prevent further abuse within the home operated in line with contemporary thinking in this case. The child was removed from the family home and a programme of education and training was instituted within a residential establishment geared to providing this. There is no indication that the child suffered in any way within the school. This case illustrates the complexities of providing security, education, and emotional support for a young person who had experienced multiple types of disadvantage. It also clearly indicates the limitations of strategies aimed at keeping children brought into the care system in contact with their families.

The aim of getting an older child ready for adulthood was centred on finding employment and a place to live. After this, the young person was set adrift. Here the system undoubtedly failed despite what appear to have been positive intentions to prepare the child for independent living. Beyond a note that the teenager had been placed in a unit where more independence was encouraged, the file provides little enlightenment into what kinds of specific efforts were made to assist with the intractable problem of supporting a child to make better decisions. If such efforts

were made, there is no information about why ultimately, these proved unsuccessful. Meaningful aftercare seems conspicuous by its absence in this case.

Finally, this voluminous file still provides only partial understanding of the strategies put in place to help this young person come to terms with all that had taken place in a short life—or, indeed, if dedicated measures were taken. While it seems evident that some consideration was given as to whether this school was a suitable placement, and this consideration continued and is evidenced in progress reports and annual reviews conducted by the school, there are still some gaps in the record. Reports and correspondence with the Reporter are all included, as are notes on communications with and visits to the family made by the local authority, but there is nothing to indicate that psychological assessment was undertaken. A team of psychologists serviced these schools.<sup>574</sup> However, in terms of the surviving records for this child, some doubt arises about what use was made of these professionals for all children who might need this type of intervention. Furthermore, what support, if any, was offered once the child was discharged from care remains a mystery.

## **Voluntary Providers—including List D Schools**

As all the case studies included so far illustrate, the voluntary sector still played a significant role in care strategies for children during the 1970s whether to provide stop-gap solutions, longer-term residential care, or remedial programmes for children who had got into trouble with the law. Local authorities may have wished to keep children at home or near to home, but this was not always possible.

### **Children's Homes**

The larger childcare providers who had a long tradition in Scotland and were in remote locations, such as Quarrier's Village or Aberlour Orphanage, shrank in size: Aberlour in particular, having closed its large orphanage ahead of the 1968 Act, looked after a population of only around 100 children in small group homes for most of the 1970s. During the 1960s, Quarrier's progressively reduced the numbers of children in its cottage homes and reduced the number of cottages. While some stability in numbers can be noted at Quarrier's during the 1970s, sharp decline in mainstream services to children arrived in the early 1980s. Smaller organisations continued to provide residential care but across the board this was a sector set on a

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<sup>574</sup> Psychologists regularly worked in List D Schools in this period, see Social Work in Scotland in 1971, Cmnd. 5136 (Edinburgh, 1972), p. 20.

path of decline where conventional childcare services were concerned. It was not, however, a service for which there was no demand; the reasons for this mostly had to do with the inability of local authorities to match ambitions for service provision with delivery of the same.

In 1976, for example, at the annual general meeting held by Quarrier's the then director of the organisation—Dr James Minto—stated in his address that:

It is rather a shattering statistic that we are providing one ninth of the total residential child care places in Scotland. We are at all times fully used and the demand for places is constant. In fact it is a sad reflection on our times that the demand for places is ever increasing. 88 % of our 500 places are filled with children from the Strathclyde Region. Put bluntly, without Quarrier's the Social Work scene in Scotland would be desperate. If we closed, 20 new individual children's homes would be required in the Strathclyde Region alone.<sup>575</sup>

Quarrier's had indeed become the default voluntary residential institution for Strathclyde region at this point, despite ambitions not to send children to remote locations or into large childcare facilities.

Embedded within the Social Work Act was the idea that local areas would be able to be more responsive to social issues in their own localities.<sup>576</sup> However, continued dependence on voluntary providers that were spread across the country, sometimes in isolated places, was nonetheless inevitable after 1968. Staff at the Scottish office recognised in 1970 that the building programme by local authorities for the provision of children's homes in Scotland was not going to meet demand.<sup>577</sup> Although some authorities had plans in place, progress was slow. Research conducted in 1970 on provision and plans to expand residential care showed that in Paisley, for example, the relative proximity to Quarrier's Village resulted in total dependence on Quarrier's.<sup>578</sup> Nearby Greenock and Port Glasgow was no better. It was commented that reliance on voluntary homes there was 'heavy' with only '7 % of

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<sup>575</sup> Quarrier's Homes: Annual Report 1975-76, p. 8.

<sup>576</sup> See Social Work in Scotland, Chapter 1, pp. 3-6 & Chapter 4, p. 20.

<sup>577</sup> NRS ED11/849: Local Authority Children's Homes Administration: Research into Local Authorities Children's Homes; minute dated 3 July 1970, signature illegible.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid., research conducted in 1970 by SWSG on the provision of children's homes and the use of voluntary homes by local authorities, comment on research, appendix 2, p. 2.



all children in their care in local authority homes'.<sup>579</sup> Ayr burgh came in for even more criticism:

Previous experience of this authority shows a rooted unwillingness to acknowledge social need or to make reasonable provision. The low numbers in care reflect this and there is no reason to suppose that there is an effective preventative service. Not to mince words they are mean.<sup>580</sup>

Ayr burgh had 45 children in care, none of which were in homes run by them; nine were in voluntary homes.<sup>581</sup> Almost certainly, these facilities were at a distance from the town. Parsimony was levelled at several local authorities by the Scottish Office. Where the populous, industrial town of Clydebank was concerned, it was commented that the authority was:

Under provided. Over the years they have been assisted by Airdrie and Coatbridge. The needs of the children at present placed in voluntary homes might show further grounds for additional local provision. That is, placement in voluntary homes, none of which are particularly convenient to Clydebank, could only be really justified if the voluntary homes concerned were designed to meet special needs.<sup>582</sup>

This last commentary on Clydebank division reveals a move that gained pace in the 1970s: voluntary delivery was increasingly viewed as an adjunct, necessary to provide specialist provision, while the aim was to move mainstream provision away from this sector. This ethos was communicated to voluntary providers. Some heard the call, others were more circumspect. Quarrier's Homes, to which the central administration had been delivering advice about the potential benefits of diversification since the mid-1960s, were amongst the latter. Dr Minto commented in the same speech given in 1976 that:

We are doing a great deal in the realm of experimentation-but our primary purpose and I would stress this, is to give the best possible substitute care to the 500 children entrusted to us. We are, I assure you constantly looking at and re-appraising our quality of care. We are ever aware of our responsibilities to Strathclyde and other Regions who use us, but above all we are aware of our responsibilities to each child with us, that he or she should be treated as an

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<sup>579</sup> Ibid.

<sup>580</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>581</sup> Ibid., table of statistics on numbers of children in care in cities, counties and burghs in Scotland; entry for Ayr Burgh.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid., comment on research, appendix 2, p. 2.

individual-and that individual caring treatment is needed to ensure that the potential of the child is realised.<sup>583</sup>

However, care philosophy had changed, and would change further. While some local authorities still depended on voluntary homes, this did not mean they were content with this situation. The 'Room to Grow' report stated that children's homes run by voluntary providers were 'not always sited conveniently and their locus sometimes deters active community and parental participation', the report's authors warned voluntary agencies that their role was in need of 're-examination and definition'.<sup>584</sup> Long-term residential care as a 'substitute' for the children of families who could not support them was no longer considered an ambition by local authorities and this would have profound consequences for care provision. Systems in place centred on prevention strategies, foster care, the use of local, residential homes as short-term solutions. Nevertheless, the wind-down of a large institution like Quarrier's would take years.

The research on provision of residential places indicates that while some local authorities did have building plans in the pipeline, these took time to arrange—finance had to be put in place, plans had to be overseen by the SWSG, and the actual building of facilities took time—then of course, such homes had to be staffed appropriately. Comment on the research indicates that authorities such as Hamilton planned to build a short-term facility; but nearby Motherwell and Wishaw ran no residential care homes for children and had no plans to create any.<sup>585</sup> Across Scotland then, there was a very uneven response to what systems were required to protect children and the Scottish Office were alert to this. One official commented that placements made in voluntary homes unquestionably increased the likelihood of children being housed far from home and that provision by local authorities was undoubtedly insufficient, regardless of whatever other measures were in place, such as prevention or availability of foster care. This writer estimated that:

Making allowance where necessary for the proximity of a varied range of voluntary children's homes, such as Edinburgh and district, my impression is that a provision of local authority places to the level of about 25% of children in care

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<sup>583</sup> Quarrier's Homes: Annual Report 1975-76, p. 8.

<sup>584</sup> 'Room to Grow' Report, p. 41.

<sup>585</sup> NRS ED11/849: Local Authority Children's Homes Administration: Research into Local Authorities Children's Homes; Appendix 2, p. 2.

would be more in line with need. On this basis we should require a further 650 places. There are local authority homes at various stages of planning...<sup>586</sup>

The provision in 'Edinburgh and district' referred to by the Scottish Office official likely alludes to, among others, homes provided by Barnardo's. These had advantages over the likes of Quarrier's Village being more linked with local communities and more accessible for parents and social workers. Barnardo's also made early efforts to accommodate specialist services. Yet as can be seen, in other parts of Scotland such facilities were not readily available. There is reason to believe in any case, that some local authorities may have begun to question the trumpeting of small group homes as a good solution for children. The 'Room to Grow' report clearly expressed this view stating

[w]e should avoid "putting all our eggs in one basket" ...during the 1950s and 1960s the Family Group Home type of unit was seen as being "the answer". We doubt whether thinking on childcare has crystallised or reached a conclusion to risk all on one type of care situation.<sup>587</sup>

The 'Room to Grow' authors recommended holding back on new building 'until a detailed analysis had been made of existing usage', and that while old accommodation might be replaced, new ideas were emerging about care solutions for children and there was a need to wait to see how these might develop.<sup>588</sup>

Glasgow did wait, but by the end of 1976 had plans in the pipeline for six new facilities. A list prepared indicates planned new homes in the following locations:

Robroyston (27 places)  
Castlemilk (27 places)  
Commonhead [Easterhouse] (27 places)  
Eastwood (27 places)  
Crookston (27 places)  
Queen's Drive [a conversion] (12 places).

The document states that it would take 15 months to construct the homes that contained 27 places each, and a conversion at Queen's Drive (Southside of Glasgow)

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<sup>586</sup> Ibid., Minute by J. B. Gillespie dated 3 July 1970, addressed to 'Mr Cowley'.

<sup>587</sup> 'Room to Grow' Report, p. 33.

<sup>588</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

would take six months. The paper further states that these plans had received social work committee approval, but had to be sent thereafter to the 'Policy and Resources Committee'; three of the plans had been so submitted and shelved indefinitely. It is therefore doubtful how many of these plans actually went forward<sup>589</sup>—though we do know that a new home at Castlemilk (Downcraig) opened towards the end of the 1970s. Across Scotland in 1979, nine new local authority children's homes opened providing around 210 places.<sup>590</sup>

There can be no doubt that the provision of residential facilities that might facilitate the protection of children's welfare fell somewhat short. Use of voluntary homes, even when it was clear that these carried major disadvantages therefore continued for some time.

### List D Schools

One area of voluntary provision that remained in demand, and for which there was no apparent substitute that local authorities could use, were specialist schools—and in fact these could often be oversubscribed. As we have seen in Case Study XX, whether a List D facility was right for a child might be considered, but there was never any guarantee that a desired placement might be available. The overwhelming majority of List D facilities were run by independent agencies. Only two—run by Glasgow—were local authority controlled in Scotland in 1968.

In 1971, with the inauguration of Children's Hearings, the SWSG issued a circular (SW10) to local authorities that requested information about all residential establishments for children and young people.<sup>591</sup> This resulted in the creation of a list of all such facilities in Scotland, including List D Schools and Assessment Centres.<sup>592</sup> These were arranged by local authority area reflecting the responsibility local government now had for these establishments—whatever sector ran them—and the philosophy promoted alongside legislative reform that children removed from their

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<sup>589</sup> GCA, SR27/5/1/65: Children in Care: General, 1975-78: Children in Care—General; List of children's homes in Glasgow area where building work planned, November 1976. The reasons for the preparation of this list are unknown, it may have been created as part of documentation to be submitted to the social work committee—in this file of miscellaneous documents, this is unclear

<sup>590</sup> Scottish Education Department, *Social Work in Scotland in 1979*, Cmnd 7907 (Edinburgh, 1980), p. 4.

<sup>591</sup> NRS, GD451/113: letter from SWSG to county and town clerks referring to responses to Circular SW10/1970, 7 April 1971.

<sup>592</sup> NRS GD451/113: List of Residential Establishments.

families would be placed in facilities accessible to kin (unless there was a very strong reason to do otherwise). In a foreword to the list it is stated:

Children's Hearings will no doubt be receiving recommendations from social work departments on particular cases with reasons for their proposed placements, and sometimes choices may be offered. It will be appreciated however that the placing of children in residential establishments is frequently a compromise between the needs of the child and the availability and suitability of particular places. A children's hearing can direct a child to reside in a particular establishment but it cannot direct that establishment to receive him.<sup>593</sup>

Ahead of the introduction of the Hearings, there had been transitional arrangements made regarding the placement of children in Approved/List D Schools, with allocations referred to SWSG and the latter making suggestions for placement on behalf of children referred to such services. They knew therefore, what problems local authorities might encounter when they took over this task in 1971. The annual report issued by SWSG at this time stated:

Schools on the Social Work Services Group List D (formerly approved schools) provide care, education and training for boys and girls, usually between the ages of 10 and 17, who have been sent there by the Children's Hearings as being in need of compulsory measures of care or who are placed there by the Secretary of State as a result of court orders. There are 27 such schools in Scotland...When Children's Hearings came into operation the powers of the court to make approved school orders as such, except in transitional cases, were withdrawn and a change was made in the arrangements for the admission of children to the schools. Till then the Social Work Services Group had advised local authorities about the school which might appropriately be named in an approved school order, but now social work departments and schools deal directly with each other on the admission of individual children, while the Group provides a central point for enquiries about the availability of places in the schools. The new arrangements are intended to develop and extend direct contact and co-operation between the schools and local authority social work departments in the light of the local authority's responsibility for the supervision of children appearing before the Children's Hearings.<sup>594</sup>

Plans had also been made to change the way these schools were financed, and these were also subject to transitional arrangements, but it was planned that by 1975, local

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<sup>593</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>594</sup> Scottish Education Department, *Social Work in Scotland in 1971*, Cmnd. 5136 (Edinburgh, 1972), pp. 18-19.

authorities would be responsible for this rather than central government. In this transitional time, SWSG had concentrated on getting voluntary-run schools to improve their facilities and introduce training for staff. Improvement of facilities sometimes meant reducing the number of places in individual schools, yet numbers being sent to these facilities was climbing:

The number of pupils in the schools on 31 March 1971 was 1,648, 96 more than at 31 March 1970. The total number of children committed in 1970-71 was 1,383, of whom 1,209 were boys, the latter figure being an increase of 180 over the previous year.<sup>595</sup>

This was one area where local authorities and voluntary organisations now had to work in co-operation and within the existing system, the idea that children would always be placed in proximity to their family was placed under stress; to resolve this problem other solutions needed to be found. Different types of provision were put in place—such as ‘intermediate’ care, involving a package of special schooling and training while the child remained at home, also often interspersed with short periods of residential training.<sup>596</sup> Foster care under the ‘Community Parents’ initiative was also tried as a substitute for sending children to List D facilities.<sup>597</sup> We lack figures for the uptake of this latter enterprise, which ran for several years during the 1970s and 1980s, or any assessment of its success. However, we do know that places in List D schools remained in heavy demand. A high-profile case of abuse at an Assessment Centre run by Glasgow—Larchgrove—in 1973 that resulted in an official inquiry, indicated that chronic overcrowding was one issue at the heart of the many problems which existed in this establishment.<sup>598</sup> Most of the children housed in this type of facility were probably awaiting allocation to a List D school.

Plans to transfer administrative and financial responsibility and oversight for the schools to local authority Social Work Departments faltered: by 1979 no resolution had been reached on this and consultation was still ongoing by the Under Secretary

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<sup>595</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>596</sup> See GCA, SR1/2 Box101: A Care Strategy for Young People in Trouble—a Report by the Director of Social Work (SRC, 1985), p. 4; this details that this type of management was slow to start around the 1970s but grew and by 1985 there were 22 intermediate schemes in Strathclyde.

<sup>597</sup> Scottish Education Department, Social Work in Scotland in 1979, Cmnd. 7907 (Edinburgh, 1980), p. 6.

<sup>598</sup> NRS, ED11/732: Glasgow Social Work Department: Establishment and Staffing Note made re Larchgrove for visit made by Hector Munro to Glasgow on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1971 and more general notes re visit [sections A-E]. For details of the scandal and official inquiry see NRS, ED15/604/2: Larchgrove Remand Home/Assessment Centre, Glasgow, newspaper cuttings.



of State for Scotland and 'a wide range of interested organisations'.<sup>599</sup> Part of the problem was that many of these schools were run on denominational lines by different churches, others were under aegis of independent trusts. Local authorities were no more willing to take them on from the point of view of the financial commitment involved and were wary about 'taking over these establishments when many local authority institutions are being closed'.<sup>600</sup> By 1984, agreement still had not been reached. A few schools were run entirely privately, and such was the demand that local authorities also made use of these.

Documents recovered in respect of one such referral by Glasgow to a privately-run school in Dumfries and Galloway reveal what may be considered poor judgement, probably made in the first instance, because of a lack of suitable placements. This case also highlights continuing concerns about the use of corporal punishment in such establishments.

#### Case Study XX: Child J<sup>601</sup>

This child was referred to the Children's Panel in 1973 probably for truancy, but had been given previous police warnings for theft. A three-page report for the panel was prepared by a social worker, which involved a visit to the 10-year old's home.<sup>602</sup> The social worker was refused entry by the child's mother and an arrangement was made to bring the child to the local social work office. The child came to the office with both parents and it transpired that the father worked away from home most of the time. The report highlighted both the poor home circumstances of the family and the desire of both parents that this child be admitted to a residential establishment. Initially the child was placed under supervision at home, but prior to the Children's Hearing in 1974 social workers noted the child had not returned to school after the summer holidays and 'has also been involved in the fringes of minor delinquency in the neighbourhood in the company of other young persistent truants.' Both parents were still keen for a residential placement and the social worker had identified a vacancy at 'a privately run educational establishment' that would cater for this child's needs 'both educationally and emotionally'.<sup>603</sup> Accordingly, child K was sent to this

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<sup>599</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>600</sup> Strathclyde Regional Council, Residential Child Care Strategy for the Eighties: Home or Away?, p. 40.

<sup>601</sup> The case study is constructed from surviving documents arising from a complaint of abuse, see GCA, [REDACTED] Children in Care: General, 1975-78. [REDACTED] DOB: [REDACTED]/1963]

<sup>602</sup> Ibid., Social Work Department Report dated 17 February 1973 signed by J. G. Montgomery.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid., Social Work Report, no date, signed by Miss M. Brooks.

residential school. An education report submitted by the school to the Reporter to the children's panel in summer 1975 states that child K had been admitted to the school soon after the second appearance at a Hearing and:

Since then has presented no major problems in management, although on one occasion...was involved in a bicycle theft in the town, for which ----- was given a stiff dose of corporal punishment. One month later...was found deliberately urinating on...bedroom carpet.

The report goes on to say that the child was 'suitably punished once more' for this act but that on the whole 'progress was satisfactory'.<sup>604</sup> The class teacher's report which is appended shows child K making little or no progress educationally.<sup>605</sup>

Two years later, this child alleged maltreatment at the school. The allegations were made at a Children's Hearing, but also to a psychologist and to the child's case worker (another social worker). This allegation was that the child was hit on the legs and that this was done by the headteacher because he knew that this child suffered with pain in the legs. Child J had stated to the Panel a refusal to return to the school and that if made to return, an intention to run away. Child J was therefore removed to an Assessment Centre run by Glasgow. The child's father offered corroboration that he had noted bruising on the child consistent with this beating on the child's return from school.

The allegation was conveyed by telephone and in writing to a Social Work District Manager.<sup>606</sup> The District Manager then wrote to the school about one week later asking for further information and also asking for clarification about what was meant by a 'stiff dose of corporal punishment' as noted on the education report submitted. The reply from the school claimed that the child had been given punishment that 'in no way differed from that meted out' to others and had been recorded in a punishment record. The punishment for the bicycle theft had been 'six with the tawse' and for urinating on a carpet 'two more' of the same. The headteacher also claimed that there had:

...been a marked deterioration in -----'s behaviour, a deterioration in my view due very largely to the inadequacy of [the child's] late social worker who was

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<sup>604</sup> Ibid., 'Education Report' signed by the headmaster dated 25 August 1975, p. 1.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid., handwritten note, signature illegible but designation held is 'AO' [Area officer?] dated 17 November 1976.

quite incapable of ensuring ----- returned to school at the proper time, thus leaving [the child] to wander the streets for weeks on end.<sup>607</sup>

The letter goes on to say that Child J had been one month late returning to school after a Christmas break and 'not at all after the following holiday, nor after October break.' Indeed, the child had not been at the school for months when this allegation was made. The headteacher claimed he had written to the child's case worker and attempted to make contact by telephone—both efforts met no response.

This case prompted considerable internal discussion about what might be done. It transpired that a senior social worker had claimed that the child had first made this allegation at a Children's Hearing, that the allegation had not been minuted, but that the Area Reporter who was present had told the Worker that the child appeared 'terrified' of being returned to the school. Accordingly, the Panel had sent the child to the Assessment Centre under a '21 day warrant (Section 37 (4) Social Work (Scotland) Act'.<sup>608</sup> The new social worker assigned to the case had visited the child in the Assessment Centre and had again listened to the allegations that included the information that the headteacher had deliberately beat the child on the legs and did not use this type of punishment on other children who were belted on the hands. The child had further relayed this information to a psychologist at the Centre.<sup>609</sup>

A report completed for the Children's Panel by the child's case worker and staff at the Assessment Centre while the child was resident there, infers that, in fact, the residential school had communicated that they could do no more for the child and had concluded that Child J 'needed a far stricter regime'. Of note is that the child's mother had died in June of that year at the time the child had left the school for holidays. There is no indication that this information had ever been communicated to the school, or indeed, if this was even known to social work until this point. Child J, a sibling, and the father were staying with relatives once again in an area of Glasgow notorious for multiple deprivation and criminality and in a home that was 'poorly maintained'; the father was unemployed. The report notes that the child was close to the father, but this parent was unable to provide guidance or discipline and the child was still liable to become involved in petty crime.

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<sup>607</sup> Ibid., letter to Glasgow social work department district manager from headteacher of the school dated 29 November 1976.

<sup>608</sup> Memo from Mr J. Lativy (Senior Social Worker) to Mr K. Gardner (District Manager) dated 22 November 1976.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid.

Recommendations made in the report included:

- A. An application for a vacancy in a List 'D' School should be applied for;
- B. The School should be within reasonable distance of home to allow visits from home at periods when leave may not be possible;
- C. The family should be involved, if possible, in [the child's] training and development and there should be reasonable communication between home and the residential establishment;
- D. Lack of control at home allied to the fact that ----- will not attend school and is likely to be involved in further offences indicates the need for [the child] to remain in care pending the availability of a suitable List 'D' School placement.<sup>610</sup>

This case demonstrates that the selection of a school by a local authority, in the case of some children at least, may have been less down to careful assessment of this match and more the result of a 'vacancy' simply coming up. If other establishments were considered, this is not recorded on the report. Such vacancies were much more likely to be in the non-statutory sector and very likely to be at some distance from a child's home. It is clear that this particular residential establishment was not right for this child, yet the child remained there (unauthorised absences aside) for two years. It is unusual that the child disclosed abuse in this public way. It is difficult to determine whether all social workers involved believed the child's disclosures: the demurring over what the Social Work Department might do about this complaint by a senior member of staff suggests some doubt about whether the child was telling the truth—though this may be based more upon poor record keeping. Evidently, the department could show no evidence that the child was especially unhappy at the school.

### **Case Study XXI: Sibling Group including Child K (placed by the local authority in local authority homes and a Roman Catholic voluntary home)<sup>611</sup>**

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<sup>610</sup> Report dated 15 November 1976.

<sup>611</sup> SWD-SW4: Box No. 1 [collection: 1730, box 4] File No: 44 (1)[ The ██████████ family]; and SWD-SW4: Box No. 3 [collection: 1730, box 3] Reg no.: C3/254/80. ██████████ CLOSED FILES.



This study deals with a family, and the experiences of one child within a sibling group of four, between 1976 and 1985 in Glasgow. The new social work regime is revealed in the ways it engaged with children and their families as well as other agencies; and the ways that different types of care were utilised. This case demonstrates two things: first, that social work involvement had moved over to 'prevention' wholesale by the mid-1970s; and second, this approach raises some big questions about the interventions employed to keep families together, particularly with regard to protecting the welfare of children. It is not always clear from the surviving record that the children's welfare (or children's preferences for their care) was always at the centre of any interventions that were made. Instead, a fire-fighting approach governs the overall picture with residential care proving to be a response only to extreme crisis.

This family of two parents and four children came to the notice of the Glasgow Social Work Department in spring 1976 when the RSSPCC phoned in an 'early warning' regarding the family's appalling housing conditions. The mother was an alleged 'heavy drinker'. They had been living in a privately-rented room and kitchen with illegally connected electricity, having earlier been evicted from a council house on non-payment of rent and fuel bills. The Social Work Department had applied its prevention strategy—paid off the electricity arrears and attempted to get them rehoused—but the parents turned down numerous offers of housing in other parts of the city. In this interim, social work had arranged for three of the children to stay with grandparents and for the oldest child to stay with an 'uncle' [a family friend rather than relative].

After several months however, during which the youngest children must have moved back home, the RSSPCC were again alerted by a school clinic to the 'filthy state' of the children and the Society's officer felt that the children needed to be taken into care for their safety. The children were placed in a local authority home and ultimately a court order was raised to keep the children in care based on evidence produced at a hearing when the RSSPCC had recorded conditions in the family home:

Cooking was done over an open fire. There was a bed which was covered by what appeared to be numerous articles of extremely dirty clothing. The ceiling had water running through it—allegedly because an upstairs neighbour was using her washing machine. The second room was found to be knee deep in

clothing and a double bed was only identifiable by its head board. There was an inside toilet which was extremely dirty and numerous flies inhabited it.<sup>612</sup>

A typewritten manuscript signed by a 'houseparent' records the admission of the children as 'emergency cases', their condition at the time, and the later interaction that took place between the children and their parents within the Home:

They were in quite a mess when they came in, with flea bites and their hair was in a mess. -----'s in fact is still not cleared up. They are quite cheeky children and well able to stand up for themselves...All three of them are very quick to lift their hands whether in defence or starting a fight off...It is obvious that they never have had much to call their own as they are very possessive about what they have...Their parents were coming up quite often to see them, sometimes together other times the mother one day the father the next. When they were up ----- did not stay in with her parents very long, you would find her wandering around and you had to tell her to go back in. There have been two occasions when Mrs ----- visited and had been drinking beforehand. On the first occasion she hit two of the younger children in the group for supposedly being cheeky to her. Any visits after that she was not allowed into the group and a special room was made available and tea provided. On the second occasion she had to be asked to leave and the S.W.D. were notified.<sup>613</sup>

The children remained in the Home but were regarded as troublesome. After a few months trouble with these parents caused an urgent transfer of the children to a large, voluntary sector facility for Roman Catholic children. During their stay there, social workers made efforts to work with the parents who had now accepted a house on a council estate. This move involved a change of case worker as the new house fell into a different area office's jurisdiction, though it may have taken some time for this change to happen. Numerous changes of case worker are a feature of this case.

Help was provided to the parents so that the children could go home for Christmas although social work reports following visits to the parents note continued problems with drinking and a house that was 'appallingly bare'. They were given help to furnish

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<sup>612</sup> GCA, SWD-SW4, Box 3 (collection 1730, box 3).

<sup>613</sup> GCA, SWD-SW4, Box 3 (collection 1730, box 3). Typewritten manuscript, 27.10.76.



the house and then on Christmas Eve a social worker left a food parcel, toys, and bedding with a neighbour on calling and there being no one at home.

The approach of the social workers to this family was clearly articulated in the family's case file at this time. These remarks make it clear that the aim was to reform the parents' behaviour so that the children might return home; but also evident is the degree to which social workers were stretched.

If some kind of relationship could be built up with the home and the parents helped to lower their defences and speak about their problems mental? domestic? drink? I think we could work towards the return of the children by the summer.

[...]

The children are happy on the surface, but reserved and "close" on another level and there is a need to get through to them as well, to really find out their needs and how these can be met. Unfortunately I have just not had the time to give them or their parents, in order to achieve any real feeling of movement.<sup>614</sup>

With the children having been in residential care for a year, efforts remained focused on improving the family's material circumstances so that the siblings could return to their parents.

At a hearing (at which the voluntary children's home was not represented as it was claimed there was nobody available) it was agreed to allow the children to return to the family home in the light of improvements and the case was reallocated to yet another social worker. The outgoing social worker applied to the Joseph Rowntree Trust for a grant to help buy a washing machine. The file also records assistance given to claim appropriate social security allowances, with social work making applications on their behalf to DHSS regarding child benefit due. The letter sent states that 'the three children will probably be coming home from [the children's home] on a permanent basis...the two girls tend to wet the bed at night and as the utilities in Mrs -----'s kitchen are rather sparse I would be obliged if one of your staff could assess this case...' (no date on letter).

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<sup>614</sup> GCA, SWD-SW4, Box 3 (collection 1730, box 3), case review.

The problem of enuresis was understated here. The female children in this family suffered badly with this and social work supplied them on at least one occasion with replacement beds. The Joseph Rowntree Trust turned down giving any washing machine help. The DHSS also refused to give financial assistance for a washing machine as the type of council housing where the family resided already had fixed washing facilities. This intervention work was an uphill struggle. The new social worker reported that the parents were 'suspicious of authority and adopt an aggressive stance in moments of tension.'

The family was assigned a 'homemaker' the following year to help the mother manage hygiene issues. The homemaker and the social worker visited the family home in summer 1979. At this meeting with the family it was agreed that the home help would 'concentrate on personal health and hygiene for girls and mother'. Mrs ---- failed to keep her next appointment with this homemaker however, but this was later rectified. After a third visit to the house that summer, the homemaker reported to social work that 'Mrs ----- unprepared and interview conducted in the kitchen because husband drunk in the living room. At one point he came through livid with anger and resentment, accusing [the homemaker] of snooping. Mrs ----- evidently very frightened of husband, and apologetic for his behaviour.'<sup>615</sup> Further engagements with the homemaker took place at social work offices.

The children were finally discharged from the supervision requirement towards the end of 1980 following a home visit: 'Home visit-all family present & no problems'.<sup>616</sup> It was now thought that as the children were older there were fewer concerns for their wellbeing. However, the family evidently remained in the orbit of the social work department and shortly after this the youngest female child, Child K, came to the attention of social work via the school who reported her dirty and neglected state and poor attendance. The child's GP, school nurse and school doctor were all alerted, and the social worker visited the family home which was 'monitored'.

The family moved from such unofficial monitoring when Child K was again reported to the local social work department in autumn 1981 by a policewoman after the child self-reported a sexual assault by a 'stranger'. The WPC told social work that the child 'was glue sniffing and from a very bad home'.<sup>617</sup> She also indicated that the father was violent; the duty social worker's notes in the referral form indicate that any visits

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<sup>615</sup> Ibid., social worker notes, 9.7.79.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid., 6.11.1980.

<sup>617</sup> GCA, SWD-SW4: Box No.3 (collection: 1730, box 3): WPC report to social worker, 30.10.81.

to the family home should be 'two handed!!'<sup>618</sup> [SW's exclamation marks] The police were of the view that the child needed guidance and support. [The alleged attacker was never identified]. A further home supervision order was obtained via the children's panel for the three younger children in the family, including Child K, early in 1982. Unfortunately, for this child, the case was referred in the middle of an industrial dispute involving members of NALGO and it was sometime before a social worker was finally allocated to investigate the child in question and her family. The family were also, once again, living in condemned housing that they had moved to of their own volition.

Roughly one month after the supervision order was granted, the guidance teacher at the child's school phoned social work to express grave concerns which included:

- a. Parental care non-existent
- b. Hygiene and sanitary conditions within the home disgraceful
- c. Child's dental health very bad-is to have six extractions—stemming from complete neglect
- d. She is out of control—awareness of alleged sexual abuse in the community, general feeling that she is a target for further abuse
- e. Said to sleep with father.<sup>619</sup>

The social worker who responded to the referral and visited twice in the same day, described conditions. On the first occasion Child K was at home alone and the worker judged it inappropriate, in view of the allegation of sexual molestation, to enter. He returned later when the father was at home and midway through a bottle of 'cheap wine'; the mother was in bed hidden under a pile of clothing. The house smelled strongly of 'urine and alcohol'. The social worker's view was that 'social work with this family would clearly be of a long term nature' and that given the serious medical needs of the child, 'more compulsory measures may be required.'<sup>620</sup>

These measures were not undertaken. Medical opinion stated that this child possibly had an untreated, chronic infection. Non-intervention was potentially life-

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<sup>618</sup> Ibid.

<sup>619</sup> Ibid., report of phone call from guidance teacher to social worker, 5.2.82.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid., social worker report following home visit, 12.3.82.

threatening. There is a long gap in the child's record and no indication of how the medical condition was dealt with. Instead Child K's return to residential care happened because of yet another referral to the Children's Hearings for an alleged criminal act by the child. Admission in mid-1982 was to a home run by Glasgow division but located well outside the city. Child K remained there for several years—although weekend and holiday visits home were mostly encouraged—even following an event in which the child sustained a skull fracture on a weekend, allegedly the result of an accident outside of the family home.<sup>621</sup> The head injury was not medically investigated until the child returned to the residential unit. This injury was accompanied by a return of the child's enuresis. At one point, a social worker described the family home as 'unfit for human habitation'. For a long period of time this child expressed an extreme ambivalence about returns to the family that although recorded, seem not to have been investigated closely—or at least, records give no clear indication that this was pursued. Child K made requests to be transferred to a children's home in Glasgow so that there might be contact with other teenage friends, but the inference was that contact with home was not desired. Child K therefore remained for some years in the same Home and school and obtained a reputation as a troublemaker.

The case worker appointed did meet with Child K on a regular basis—but pointedly, this was often in social work offices, or at the family home, or, occasionally, in public places—but not at the residential home, which was some distance from Glasgow. The child was finally discharged from the children's home aged 16, by which point the father had died suddenly and Child K returned to live with her mother and an older sibling. It is recorded that the stay at the children's home had mixed outcomes. Child K learned better physical self-care and took pains over her hygiene and appearance; the child appeared to form good relationships with other residents. But episodes of disruptive behaviour were also recorded.

This case reveals several things about the approach of the Glasgow Social Work Department. First of these is the way in which the cases of individual children were being managed as part of a 'problem family' scenario. While the policy of social work under contemporary legislation encouraged this method, this style of approach and the type of documentation it encouraged, appeared to engender a lack of close

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<sup>621</sup> Ibid., report of phone call from children's home to social worker, 1.11.82.

attention to the problems of the children as individuals and allowed these to be overlooked. The wider family context took precedence.

Certainly, there is ample evidence that many signals regarding the safety of Child K within the family home were simply missed or ignored. The dysfunctional nature of this family aside, that children could be allowed to return to unsafe, condemned housing demonstrates how widespread this problem was. Descriptions of the flat's environment include details such as a bucket filled with human excrement in the bedroom and the fact that they were cooking on an open fire. The safety of this place seems not have been properly considered when placed alongside an aversion to taking the children into long-term care.

Secondly, despite the immense amount of documentation in both Child K's individual file and a family file recovered as part of this research (it must be presumed further files exist for the other three children that were not accessed) there are many gaps in the record that suggest there was inadequate follow-up of this family for long periods of time. Medical records are absent and there is absolutely no reference in Child K's file that she was ever sent to a child guidance clinic or for psychiatric assessment; yet it was known that she was engaged in solvent abuse, and that sexual abuse was suspected. A school guidance teacher pointedly suggested the girl may have been subject to sexual abuse in the home. Even in the context of the time, it seems surprising that this possibility was not pursued. If it ever was, there is no information in the case file about this.

Thirdly, and most relevant to the subject of residential care for children is the clear reluctance there was to admit children unless there was absolutely no choice; there is no indication in these files that these children were placed in any of the Homes allocated according to their individual needs. When parents caused upset at the local authority home, it was the children's lives that were disrupted when they were sent away to a voluntary home. The record provides little information about what this experience was like for them, but it appears to have provided a time in which the children were consigned to the worst of both worlds—weekends spent with neglectful parents and weekdays spent in a large institution not renowned for its comforts.

Fourthly, and in relation to the latter point, note must be made of the disconnect between field workers and residential workers that is reflected in record keeping for children who experienced this kind of mixed-bag of care options. Following the reorganisation of children's services and the employment of trained social workers, a

more joined-up approach to children's care through regular case reviews and at hearings aimed to promote fuller records and clear channels of communication. Reviews filled in by residential workers appear to have been completed ahead of case conferences and were submitted alongside a similar type of form completed by the case worker. Yet Child K's case notes demonstrate that data about children kept by different arms of the care system still resulted in records that are by no means comprehensive and which often lack key information. Standardised review forms in the file underline the attempts by Glasgow's social work department in this period to provide better records that might promote continuity of care; but a lot of these are completed in a perfunctory fashion and material is often undated. Documents are also filed in no particular order.

In handwritten case notes recording visits to the family home and meetings with the Child K in a variety of contexts, as well as phone calls received from other professionals involved with the case, there are gaps. Except for review forms completed by the residential worker, any notes made on the child's progress in the children's home were not transferred to the personal case file. There is no indication that the person completing the form in the home was the child's key worker or what their relationship was to the child. This suggests that the child's file was kept by social work and residential workers had no access to this information—a situation that creates a very imperfect picture. It also further underlines the problem, which was that caseworkers sometimes did not inform residential workers about a child's background, except very superficially, and residential workers had no direct access to this information unless the child disclosed it, or it was discussed at case reviews.

The biggest gap in the record concerns the response of social work to intimations of sexual abuse. It seems evident from the small number of case files viewed for this period that social workers lacked clear guidance when it came to allegations or intimations of sexual abuse within the family or immediate kin network. This is perhaps not surprising. In a 1992 publication on *Child Protection Policy, Practice and Procedure* produced by Directors of Social Work in Scotland, it was noted that sexual abuse was not acknowledged in Government guidance on child abuse in England and Wales until 1986 but that in Scotland there was 'muted' response to the public inquiry into the Cleveland affair in 1987.<sup>622</sup> Notwithstanding that response, the

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<sup>622</sup> Directors of Social Work in Scotland, *Child Protection Policy, Practice and Procedure* (HMSO, Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 1-2.



percentage of sexual abuse cases identified as proportion of all types of abuse between 1987 and 1991 increased from 15% in 1987 to 23% in 1991.<sup>623</sup>

## Summary

For children brought into the care system after 1968, the options available may have remained much the same as before, but how these were applied progressively changed over the proceeding two decades. During the 1980s many residential establishments for children would close. Glasgow shut a number of the homes it had opened or expanded in the 1940s—such as Eversley Children’s Home. Among voluntary homes, closures included large, well-known institutions like Quarrier’s Village and Smyllum Park Orphanage. Some List D schools that had long histories—beginning their existence in the nineteenth century as industrial training schools—also shut their doors or became very much smaller in size. With the reduced emphasis on residential care, what replaced this was a mixed picture of preventative work with families and increased efforts to develop foster care as a diverse model of community care for children, providing short and long-term options as well as families for children that might previously have been sent to residential schools.

In terms of protecting children’s welfare and preventing their abuse in care there seems to have been an absence of independent oversight of institutions once inspection was no longer undertaken by the Scottish Office. Individual children were supervised much more closely after 1968 and even in Glasgow where the turnover of social workers appeared to have been high, some social workers did seem to develop quite close relationships with the children in their care. Nonetheless, the focus was always on returning children to the family home with residential and foster care regarded as a respite or stop-gap. While we have only reviewed a small number of case files from this period, these indicate complex family circumstances and social workers struggling to respond (including to intimations of abuse within the family or community).

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<sup>623</sup> Ibid, p. 69.

## Patterns in Care 1968-1994

Figures for children taken into care in Scotland are included in Appendix 1. Table 2 within this collection of statistics reveals that following the introduction of social work departments and the system of Children's Hearings, the number of children in care in Scotland reached a high of 20,703 in 1973. Of these, 5,661 were in foster care, and 6,285 were in some form of residential care. This clearly shows that the larger proportion of children were now under other forms of supervision in the community.

These figures declined progressively (with some short periods of relative stability) until by 1989 we see a population of 12,037 children in care across Scotland. Of this figure, those in foster care numbered 2,560 and in residential care 2,364. Children in foster care slightly outnumbered those in residential care, demonstrating the long-term commitment shown in Scotland to this care model had not diminished. However, it is probable that the decline in use of residential care also, in part, reflects growing recognition of the emotional damage caused to children separated from their families and placed long-term in residential care settings. We have seen the level of checks that were made on prospective foster parents from the 1970s onwards; this type of vigilance was further promoted through regulatory change in the 1980s and amendments to existing legislation as well as new legislation.<sup>624</sup>

Where oversight of residential and foster care provision was concerned, we have noted how the Scottish Office now took something of a back seat, only becoming directly involved with special issues that emerged in care settings for individual children—for example, in the case of the deaths of children. On standards generally, their role was otherwise more advisory than directive, often concerned with issues such as training needs. Whatever the working relationship that advisors within CAS had with individual social work departments, this is somewhat opaque within surviving records examined. We must presume that interaction happened, especially if problems arose, but there does not appear to have been any kind of programme of contact, such as existed under the previous system of inspection. Overall, the standard of care provided was the responsibility of local authorities. In this area, much depended on the calibre of staff working at the sharp end of childcare—the case worker, the foster care co-ordinator, the childcare consultant who provided advice to staff residential homes, as well as the residential workers themselves.

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<sup>624</sup> See Norrie.

Following local government reorganisation, a more complicated and arguably, within some authorities, more remote management structure also held sway. Senior regional managers in Strathclyde, for example, might have had occasion to concentrate their energies on standards in childcare in particular divisions, but this too cannot have been a matter of routine for they also had responsibility for many diverse areas of welfare provision. Some of these considerations and what happened in practice are examined in the remainder of this section.

## **The Case of Strathclyde Regional Council and Glasgow City Council's Social Work Services for Children**

After 1968, the numbers of children entering the care system in Glasgow steadily rose—as they appear to have done across Scotland. In the summer of 1973, the Director of Social Work in Glasgow informed his committee that social work services were under extreme stress, staff morale was low and unless something was done to remedy this situation, services would have to be cut.<sup>625</sup>

Reorganisation of local government occurred in 1975, and as staff, some newly appointed, took charge of their responsibilities this was the occasion for reappraisal of some essential services. A discussion document for childcare in Glasgow was submitted to Strathclyde's Director of Social Work in 1976.<sup>626</sup> The document is headed by the following statement:

In view of the serious situation that exists in Glasgow there is an urgent need to action a number of specific points in depth. The emphasis however, should be on action rather than discussion and the use of non-operational District, Divisional and Regional staff to achieve maximum impact.<sup>627</sup>

It proceeds to recommend myriad aims to improve prevention strategies such as the introduction of 'day foster care' and a call for more registered childminders. Where residential care was concerned, the region needed to 'develop centres of Excellence in field and residential establishments'.<sup>628</sup> Such excellence would encompass:

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<sup>625</sup> GCA, DTC-8-1-24: Corporation of Glasgow, Social Work and Health Committee—Memorandum by Director of Social Work (June 1973), pp. 1-2.

<sup>626</sup> GCA, SR27/5/1/65: Children in Care: General, 1975-78; I. Bailie and P. Bates, 'Child care in Glasgow: Future Strategies and Points Requiring Action'.

<sup>627</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid.*

- a) Declared policy statement for each residential establishment –type of regime objectives, etc.
- b) Develop short-term and long-term fostering placements
- c) Develop alternative accommodation and care systems for the older child
- d) Inspectorate team –to monitor and establish standards by having full authority to take any action required
- e) In-service training programme for basic grade staff (field and residential) and advanced training for senior social workers
- f) Establish District Child Care Action Groups (see Lothian papers by P Bates)
- g) Establish joint area team/residential establishment action groups to develop standards.<sup>629</sup>

The aim to develop centres of excellence certainly was ambitious since statistics presented with the report indicate that in 1975, of the 306.25 (WTE) staff in Glasgow children's homes only 13 possessed professional qualifications—and of course, this assessment may have included nurses still employed by the authority. By the end of 1976 this number had increased to 359.25 with 28 holding qualifications.<sup>630</sup> As we can see, the discussion document mentions the aim of improving this situation for residential and field staff. Of particular note, are the 'District Child Action Groups' and an 'Inspectorate team'. Unfortunately, no further record of either development taking place has been recovered.

This plan for action laid out the priorities for improvement and change but we do not know what measures were specifically put in place following this or in what order these emerged. The discussion document cautioned against too much further discussion—but discussion there would be. This was the situation inherited by the new Strathclyde regional authority.

Services for children were administered at regional, divisional and area levels within Strathclyde after 1975. While at the head of the service there was a director, deputies were in post at divisional level, and within divisions there were senior managers

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<sup>629</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-2. We have not located a copy of the 'Lothian Papers'.

<sup>630</sup> GCA, SR27-14-3-3-4: 'Child Care in Glasgow; Care of Children Statistics 1971-1976 Glasgow Division'—Table 8 [figures for qualified staff 1971-74 are not included].

whose remit encompassed the delivery of services to children. The committee structure also became more fragmented with sub-committees at divisional level, and sub-committees at regional level aimed at particular areas of operations. Such committees were made up of elected members. When this administration was at the planning stage there was awareness that old-style committees, such as the Children's Committee might find themselves re-constituted as subcommittees bringing all their previous ways of thinking with them.<sup>631</sup> We have not recovered evidence of how childcare was overseen by committees throughout the time that Strathclyde region existed, but it is thought that mainly it was encompassed by a mixture of standing sub-committees and occasional ad hoc committees working on specific areas at regional and divisional levels.

Attempts were made to ameliorate the problems of this system and the danger of committees being too much at a distance from the services they oversaw, and of poor lines of communication. For example, in 1977, the region's social work committee set up four groups to conduct research, discuss needs and produce reports for some key areas of social work provision, one of which was childcare.<sup>632</sup> These groups were something of a novelty being made up of elected members and professionals working in the field. They were called Officer/Member groups accordingly and were an attempt to 'break free' of restrictions perceived as inherent within the usual ways of doing things in Scottish local authorities. The report eventually produced through this study stated:

True innovation in local authorities is rare. Fear of change, fear of precedents and anomalies all tend to perpetuate traditional systems. The committee process itself, with its pre-determined agendas, its rules of procedure, its focus on itemised decision-making at the expense of policy-making, too often becomes a chivalrous ritual, a substitute for real action...comprehensive policy documents are seldom produced. Any such documents are usually produced by officials, and it is often difficult for the elected representative to identify with them or even to understand the reasoning behind them...Traditional structures militate against this.<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>631</sup> Social Work in Scotland, p. 52.

<sup>632</sup> The four different groups established under this scheme looked at 1. addiction problems and services, 2. services to offenders, 3. services to the 'mentally handicapped' and 4., child care services.

<sup>633</sup> Strathclyde Regional Council, 'Room to Grow': Report of a special officer/member group of the councils social work committee on child care in Strathclyde, Report and Discussion, November 1979, p. i.

This statement appears to recognise many of the problems that had dogged the old Children's Department and that we examined in Part One of this report, wherein the childcare officer had informed the committee about the state of childcare services, requested appropriate resources, and had been met with reviews conducted by the operations and methods department that denied these. The Child Care Committee thereafter seemed unable/unwilling to support departmental staff. The Officer/Member group was an attempt to cut across such divisions, promote common insights into the childcare system among all those responsible for oversight as well as those working within the service, stimulate discussion and come up with agreed policy.

On the back of the study's findings, plans were also to be put in place to create

divisional schemes for the implementation of the "operational" recommendations—that is, those proposals which concern procedures or standards of practice or deployment of resources, and which may be carried out largely within existing levels of resources and through current liaison procedures.<sup>634</sup>

These schemes were to be formulated by the five divisional directors of social work in Strathclyde region. Monitoring of any progress made by the divisions was to be undertaken by a group made up of some of the original Officer/Members who would then produce a further report. A copy of any such monitoring report on changes made at divisional levels, if this was produced, has not been recovered.<sup>635</sup>

The report produced by the Officer/Member group was published in full at the end of 1979 under the title 'Room to Grow' and its findings became official regional policy. There can be no doubt that the nature of this group was innovative, and the findings it published after extensive research and discussion were critical of what was in place for children. Areas covered by the group were ambitious in their scope, and admirable in the insights they displayed about what factors affected children in the region—the group looked at a multitude of wide-ranging issues such as play facilities, housing and health matters, family incomes, and so forth—but its scope was enormous. The report produced no fewer than 190 separate, general

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<sup>634</sup> Ibid., p.iii.

<sup>635</sup> The documentary archive for Strathclyde Region is vast, time constraints on research did not permit lengthy searches for this item.



recommendations as well as a host of specific recommendations within different sections of the report.<sup>636</sup>

Where children in the care system was concerned, the group produced a summary of the issues identified and objectives for resolving these which were arranged in a table. A transcription of this table is presented as Appendix 2 of this report.

As can be seen from this summary, this group likely did obtain a good grasp of the broad landscape of the childcare system. Certain elements within this table presented as 'constraints' on the delivery of improvements to childcare would have been familiar to childcare managers in the 1950s, namely:

- low staffing levels;
- low level of appropriately trained staff;
- staff poorly paid;
- present facilities often poorly sited;
- homes poorly designed for child care offered;
- remoteness of management;
- nil involvement of training agencies;
- absence of consistent review;
- unimaginative use of services and traditional thinking; and
- financial constraints.

The report also states clearly that the lack of a 'clear national Social Policy for Children' was regretted and elaborated that:

There has been a growing movement to urge central government to formulate a Social Policy for children, but it seems unlikely that such a document will emerge; local authorities are thus left with the primary responsibility of ensuring that local conditions are conducive to the growth and development of children to their maximum potential.<sup>637</sup>

The report also recognised and stated—perhaps for the first time in Scotland—that where children brought into the care system because of poor parenting were

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<sup>636</sup> 'Room to Grow' Report, pp. 45-53.

<sup>637</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

concerned, these children also ended up 'suffering considerably from institutional parenting.'<sup>638</sup>

One area of particular concern was those children subject to the local authority's assumption of parental rights under section 16 of the Social Work Act, identified as 'the most serious step the Council can take in intervening in the child's life'.<sup>639</sup> A recommendation was made for a 'sophisticated review system for all children in care' together with 'sound administrative and professional machinery' to monitor children once a Section 16 order was in force.<sup>640</sup> The report recommended six-monthly reviews that brought together everyone involved in a 'face to face' meeting. Importantly, they stated that it was a child's right to 'attend his/her review and participate as fully as possible and the said administrative and professional machinery needed '[s]erious attention'.<sup>641</sup>

Accordingly, another piece of research was commissioned by the Director of Social Work to look at this group of children and a report entitled 'Strathclyde's Children' was published in 1980.<sup>642</sup> At a social work committee meeting in September 1981, some of the findings of the report were discussed and it was revealed that decisions about such children were often based on work mostly done by junior members of the social work team that was signed off by someone more senior, but often the designation of this person was not ascertainable from the paperwork generated.<sup>643</sup> Moreover, there was 'a disturbing lack of continuity in the care of the child'.<sup>644</sup> This was most easily seen in changes of social workers assigned to children.<sup>645</sup> There was a lot of work to be done in this area to effect improvements.

A further area of worry was after-care and the poor quality of this. The report recognised that many children were ill-equipped to manage independent living, relatively few took up higher education or vocational training and 'some return to

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<sup>638</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid.

<sup>641</sup> Ibid.

<sup>642</sup> This report was published towards the end of 1980. Unfortunately, we have not been able to obtain a copy, but it is understood that a sample of children were selected across different divisions of Strathclyde and their journey through the care system examined including the reasons for the use of a Section 16 order.

<sup>643</sup> GCA, SR1/2/60: Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work (operations) Sub-Committee Agenda for meeting 15th September 1981; Appendix A (Summary of the Report, 'Strathclyde's Children'), p. 2.

<sup>644</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>645</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

the Department as homeless, handicapped or offenders'.<sup>646</sup> Several recommendations were made:

1. Children in care should be well informed about themselves and their family affairs.
2. There should be positive discrimination towards children in care, so that they have every opportunity to compensate for the disadvantages they have experienced.
3. There should be no requirement that young people have to leave residences at school leaving age.
4. More use should be made of assisting and encouraging older children to pursue training.
5. Information, preferably in a booklet, should be given to all older children leaving care about the way in which they can continue to be befriended.
6. More independent living units serviced with caretaking duties, would help young people without families leaving care.
7. Children should know why they are in care and be more involved in decisions affecting them.
8. Volunteers can assist as advocates on the child's behalf, to represent his views and press his advantage.
9. Information systems should be developed to ensure that the child has access to relevant details about himself and his family affairs.<sup>647</sup>

Aftercare always was the cinderella service of the childcare system. Although this negative status was undoubtedly recognised by the late 1970s, we have recovered little evidence, that this changed significantly following this time.

The Officer/Member study on children was the first report commissioned by the region on childcare policy and it was clear about criticising social work for its failures, and it was ambitious to see these rectified. It is difficult to assess the level of progress it inspired on the ground—but certainly, there was some progress. Use of large, remote homes diminished rapidly from this point and some new, local authority homes were purpose built; services were more responsive to need and less stymied by tradition, with new services—often presented as partnerships with voluntary organisations—in areas like intermediate care and residential schools for the so-called 'maladjusted'. There was innovation in fostering campaigns so that children

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<sup>646</sup> 'Room to Grow' Report, p. 26.

<sup>647</sup> 'Room to Grow' Report, p. 27.

who in the past would have been excluded from this form of care were considered for it. A six-monthly review system was put in place, with standard proformas produced.<sup>648</sup>

While improvements were ongoing, however, there was wider political change taking place in the background. Strathclyde was a Labour-voting heartland and there was undoubtedly friction between local and central government—the views of powerful Labour-controlled councils such as Strathclyde did prevail locally for a time. In 1983 Strathclyde region published its ‘Social Strategy for the Eighties’.<sup>649</sup> In this it was declared that the council still wished to ‘remain true to the principles of an egalitarian society and make sure our services are provided for those in need’.<sup>650</sup> These services covered many areas that affected children: at the time ‘just over one quarter of all children in the region were part of families who were dependent on benefit payments’.<sup>651</sup> High levels of poverty, unemployment and in many parts of Strathclyde, continued overcrowding in housing, presented a worrying scenario to the Council. Yet, figures for children entering the care system remained stable between the late 1970s and early 1980s, and from 1984 began to decline further. By 1984, the types of facilities that might once have invited in children from families in crisis were gone.

Long-stay residential care for some groups of children was still needed. In Strathclyde there appears to have been an awareness that this form of care may have been relatively neglected: another childcare report was published, this time concentrated upon children’s homes.

The ‘Residential Child Care Strategy for the Eighties’, subtitled ‘Home or Away?’ highlighted that the residential sector had shrunk massively.<sup>652</sup> This report was the result of investigations and discussions by a working party. The make-up of the group was very different from that which undertook ‘Room to Grow’, being made up of social work managers, senior social workers, representatives from List D schools and other initiatives aimed at wayward children such as intermediate care, and a full

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<sup>648</sup> We have noted evidence of these forms in case files. For examples of the forms see GCA, SR27/10/3: Practice Guidelines for Social Workers (SRC, 1982).

<sup>649</sup> GCA, SR.361.61: Strathclyde Regional Council, ‘Social Strategy for the Eighties’, no date, probably 1983.

<sup>650</sup> Ibid., Foreword to the report by Councillor Richard Stewart, leader of the Council.

<sup>651</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>652</sup> Strathclyde Regional Council, Residential Child Care Strategy for the Eighties: Home or Away? (no date, likely 1983-4); foreword by F. E. Edwards, Director of Social Work for Strathclyde region.

representation of residential care workers from both the voluntary and statutory sectors. Its remit was to produce a report on 'the central practice and policy issues' of residential care of all types; and to 'illustrate the problems and requirements' in different areas of this system.<sup>653</sup> It is claimed early in the report that in Strathclyde 75 percent of children in care facilities were 12 years old or older and the problem of large sibling groups—for whom this type of care had tended to be the default—had been greatly reduced by the wider societal trend of smaller families.<sup>654</sup>

The various strategies that had brought about a transformation in the services delivered to children who needed care and protection are outlined in terms of prevention, rehabilitation, homefinding (foster care) and, interestingly, a 'Children's Rights Strategy', which aimed to respect the individual rights of children brought into care.<sup>655</sup> Not stated, but implicit within this context is that if a child expressed a wish to stay in residential care over other forms of care available, the child had that right.

It is acknowledged in the report that staff in residential homes had struggled with low status and low morale as their role changed in relation to that of field workers who now usually had professional qualifications but the time had come to acknowledge that this form of care was not about providing a substitute family, and old fashioned ideas about residential carers needing only intuitive qualities no longer applied. Children who found themselves in Homes were acknowledged as young people who often had complex needs. Residential care was therefore, about 'the professional care of children in a residential setting with elements of group and individual living, basic care, nurturing, remedial help and planned intervention.'<sup>656</sup> The report emphasised that reality fell far short of this ideal.<sup>657</sup>

Many of the issues raised in this 120-page report were, by this point, familiar as problematic aspects of the care system and we have seen them played out in the case studies included in section 8 of this report. These included de-motivated staff, problems with obtaining appropriately qualified residential staff and retaining these, inappropriate placements, failures to review children placed in long-term care properly so that it could be established that care met individual needs, friction between residential and field workers, and failures to listen to children's views. The

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<sup>653</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>654</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>656</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

provision of high-quality residential care was resource intensive and expensive. The conclusions reached were that although this was a sector that might continue to decline, there were areas within it where provision would still be needed and a more positive view of the potential value of residential care for some children was required. Broad recommendations included the following:

1. take decisions about specialisation. The organisation of services cannot be left to individual homes;
2. develop information services that can anticipate adequately different levels of need;
3. develop supervision and consultation support networks;
4. develop Admission Procedures which match the placement of children to their needs. Steps already taken in this direction have demonstrated beyond doubt the value of such procedures;
5. develop Review Systems that monitor the effectiveness of care offered;
6. ensure clarification, by means of written statements, of the purpose and aims of each home and unit, and in relation to each child;
7. ensure an effective partnership between Residential Staff and other parts of the service;
8. respect the rights of children in care and their parents;
9. extend the residential keyworker system throughout the residential sector, and continue such roles in the community by residential workers when appropriate;
10. develop staffing ratios appropriate to the new responsibilities.<sup>658</sup>

The report's findings underlined the known fact that many children placed in residential care were older and substantial numbers had previous experience of other types of care solutions. The vision expanded upon for residential care was for a professional service for children—not just a roof over their heads, medical care and three square meals a day—but a therapeutic environment geared to collective and individual needs. Readily acknowledged is that the key to taking forward the improvements required was appropriate staffing of residential establishments for children. Here the following was noted:

Concern has been expressed that stress is caused by low staffing levels in some establishments, whereby pressures are increased by the difficulty of working a satisfactory rota, and work with groups and individuals becomes virtually

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<sup>658</sup> Ibid., p. 8.



impossible. Different types of establishments need different staffing ratios. Cost factors are crucial, and new ways need to be found of achieving some of the benefits of groupwork with small numbers, without necessarily maintaining a high staff ratio at all times, such as using peripatetic groupworkers, overlapping shifts, or introducing small units into larger establishments.<sup>659</sup>

It is stated that when staff left it often took a long time to replace them; staff were becoming ill because of the amount of overtime worked, and that staff responded inappropriately to situations that arose in homes involving children, which raised stress levels further.<sup>660</sup>

Overall, this report is sympathetic to the difficulties of working in this sector and the need to improve the environments of residential establishments not just for children, but also for staff and to introduce support systems for staff in terms of regular supervision and access to training. The report says little about financing such improvements but as the extract above suggests, in cash-strapped councils much of this transformation was expected to be done from within existing budgets.

There is tacit acknowledgment in much of this report that stress levels in children's facilities were often high and as stated, staff sometimes responded inappropriately to these. This factor is not elaborated upon. There is no mention in any of this about enhanced checking of the personal credentials of residential staff employed. The use of childcare consultants to assist staff in decision making and address the needs of individual children is also mentioned;<sup>661</sup> however, any further supervision of the service in terms of inspection procedures is not addressed.

## **Staff Training**

A constant theme running through all these reports is the calibre of staff.

In 1969, available training was as follows:

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<sup>659</sup> Ibid. p. 16

<sup>660</sup> Ibid.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid., p. 20; the role of these consultants is acknowledged as being external to the daily running of homes and schools but nevertheless as providing a useful adjunct that might act as an independent opinion and as someone whose advice might help reduce stress in homes. In reviewing child care files, we have come across few references to such personnel. The role of consultants was enhanced following publication of the Room to Grow report and they seem to play a part in staff development. For overview of their role, see some of the material in GCA, GCA, SR27/5/1/64: 'Child Care Consultants'.

The 'Letter of Recognition of the Central Training Council in Child Care—for child care officers' and a 'Certificate in Residential Child Care of the Scottish Advisory Committee on Child Care—for house parents'.<sup>662</sup>

In addition:

Four Scottish universities offered courses of training within which the student could take options in child care, probation, family casework, medical social work, or psychiatric social work. One university offered a 2-year course for graduates whose degree included some relevant subjects. The other three offered courses of 12-15 months for graduates with relevant degrees. For graduates with non-relevant degrees there were one-year post-graduate courses in social sciences, which included practical work and were a pre-requisite for admission to a one-year course leading to a qualification in social work. Non-graduates could complete the social science course offered by Dundee University in two years before taking a course leading to a qualification.

Two-year courses were available at two colleges of education and one central institution in Scotland which led to the award of the Letter of Recognition of the Central Training Council in Child Care: the same teaching institutions also had a separate two-year course on completion of which students gained the Certificate in Social Work of the Council for Training in Social Work. These two awards could also be gained by experienced child care or welfare officers who successfully completed appropriate one-year courses at the two colleges and who satisfied certain conditions of age and experience; this is an ad hoc programme agreed for a limited period. The minimum entry standard to most college courses other than one-year courses was 5 passes at Ordinary grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education (or equivalents) but exceptions were often made for older applicants.

A three-year course in social work designed largely for school leavers, with entry at age 18, was introduced by Moray House College of Education in 1968. The first year of the course is concerned with general education: the later two years are assessed by the Councils for purposes of qualification as a social worker.

The Scottish Advisory Council on Child Care approved one-year courses at two colleges of further education leading to the award of its Certificate

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<sup>662</sup> Scottish Education Department, *Social Work in Scotland in 1969*, Cmnd. 4475 (Edinburgh, 1970), p. 56.

in Residential Child Care. Experienced staff of children's homes could attend a one-year course at Glasgow University and gain the Senior Certificate in Residential Child Care. This course was temporarily discontinued in 1969.

In 1969, while no new courses began during the year there was a general increase in the number of students training. Courses continued largely unchanged in content but moves towards the generic training required for the staff of the new social work departments were made. At Jordanhill College of Education, the amount of joint teaching on the various courses was considerably increased and a more generic view to social work was given to the students, although at the end of the course they will still receive qualifications from the two Training Councils concerned...The one-year course for the diploma in applied social studies at Edinburgh University was replaced by a course leading to the award of the Diploma in Social Work, and entry to the course was restricted to applicants with degrees which include social administration, sociology and psychology.<sup>663</sup>

The innovation of the generic social worker somewhat upset the training regime. From a very low base, there had been significant expansion in education during the 1960s that fitted people to take up positions as childcare officers, though clearly it took time for these students to emerge from education and take up professional posts. Now it was all change again. As can be seen in the progress that had been made, there was a bias towards academic and vocational qualifications that best suited candidates for field work and management posts—residential childcare qualifications still lagged behind.

A few years later, in 1976, the annual report from SWSG stated:

Provisional returns for 1976 show that 327 students completed courses Scotland leading to the award of the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work—163 in universities, 121 in colleges of education, and 43 in central institutions. Final arrangements were made in 1976 for the establishment of the first Certificate in Social Service scheme in Scotland under the auspices of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work and based on Langside College of Further Education Glasgow. In this new type of social work training, which is designed for various categories of staff in the social services for whom training as a social worker is not appropriate, students are required to complete three modules each lasting for about a term, and these, interspersed with supervised learning

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<sup>663</sup> Ibid. pp. 56-7.

at work, form an integrated scheme of study to be completed in not less than two years and not more than five. The Social Work Services Group continued to encourage staff development in the voluntary sector by meeting the cost of training officer or staff development officer appointments in a number of the larger voluntary organisations.<sup>664</sup>

Numbers of candidates qualifying with the social work certificate (CQSW) were rising and a mostly practice-based course for unqualified workers in diverse areas of social care was now on offer, as a generic course, this might include residential childcare workers. Other developments encouraged residential staff working in the voluntary sector to take up training opportunities though these are not described in detail. A hope that had been expressed since 1948 was that staff working in children's departments and children's homes might be seconded to undertake certificated training. But efforts to achieve this were piecemeal. In residential care in particular, it was difficult to allow large numbers of staff time away to undertake training full time, and there was, in any case, a high staff turnover in this kind of work. Organisations that seconded staff needed to know they would return to their posts. In some ways too, there may have been a certain amount of resistance to the idea of the 'professional' residential worker. No consensus existed in the late 1960s about what the status of these important workers was within the overall social work system.<sup>665</sup> The notion that children's homes should provide a substitute home with substitute parents was one that was slow to disappear. Certainly, within the late 1980s many authorities and voluntary bodies were still advertising for 'houseparents' as the following example shows:

#### SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT

##### Temporary Houseparent

£6,177-£8, 490 (Qualification Bar £8091) ...

Location: Perth

Candidates should be mature and have a relevant qualification or experience in working with children. They should be prepared to work evenings and weekends on a rota basis and undertake sleeping-in duties for which an additional

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<sup>664</sup> Scottish Education Department, *Social Work in Scotland in 1976*, Cmnd. 6198 (Edinburgh, 1977), p. 5.

<sup>665</sup> *Social Work In Scotland*, p. 183.

payment is made. A job specification is available. Application forms for the above posts are available from and returnable to the Director of Manpower...<sup>666</sup>

The Certificate in Social Service mentioned in the annual report was an attempt to bridge the gap between allowing staff to be away from work for a year and keeping them in their jobs while they completed training over a flexible amount of time.

By 1979, the numbers of new awards of the CQSW rose to 410 and the annual report by SWSG noted that more places on these courses were being opened up and that during the year 1979-80 there were 777 students engaged on them.<sup>667</sup> The report further noted that 'the number of staff in social work departments was 28,089 (26,000) in terms of whole-time equivalents. There were 2,103 (1,891) senior and main grade social workers, of whom 91 per cent (89 per cent) held the CQSW or equivalent qualification.'<sup>668</sup>

The first students to obtain the Certificate in Social Care emerged in 1979—there were 12 of them.<sup>669</sup> We do not know how many of these were working specifically in childcare, but it can clearly be seen that this was never going to be enough. The 'Home or Away' report noted that in the Strathclyde childcare sector, 10.2 percent of residential childcare workers held 'appropriate qualifications' and that this was against a UK average of 18 percent. In 1981 there had been, however, a huge leap in the number qualifying with the Certificate in Social Service—163 students of whom 56 were from the childcare sector.<sup>670</sup> Though it must be added, that not all among this 56 would work in children's homes, many might be employed in day care facilities or as social work assistants in the field.

By the following year, ahead of the publication of 'Home or Away', 135 new students had applied for this course (111 of this number from Strathclyde) but only 75 had been accepted (58 from Strathclyde). However, the maximum number who would be allowed to enrol was 45 and so 13 members of staff would have to wait—and the waiting list constantly grew.<sup>671</sup>

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<sup>666</sup> Advertisement, Perthshire Advertiser, 11 August 1989, p. 24.

<sup>667</sup> Scottish Education Department, Social Work in Scotland in 1979, Cmnd. 7907 (Edinburgh, 1980), p. 5.

<sup>668</sup> Ibid.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid.

<sup>670</sup> Strathclyde Regional Council, Residential Child Care Strategy for the Eighties: Home or Away? (no date, likely 1983-4), p. 58.

<sup>671</sup> Ibid.

Residential care for children may have been a declining sector but that which existed was becoming increasingly specialised and there was also a requirement to increase the staff to child ratio in order to deal adequately with children who had suffered multiple disadvantages. So, the demand for training would only increase.

Although local authorities and voluntary organisations preferred to employ qualified and experienced staff, there was competition to engage them. We have not obtained any evidence that qualifications were a pre-requirement for residential work, though increasingly it is likely that staff coming into this area of employment would do so in the knowledge that personal development and a commitment to undertake training was part of their role.<sup>672</sup> Residential staff who undertook the role of 'keyworker' were particularly targeted for in-service training to undertake this important position.<sup>673</sup> This move recognised that keyworkers could have a pivotal role to play in any plans made to move a child into foster care. We have seen in the case of Child J that this was part of the role of residential workers by the early 1980s. It was increasingly unlikely that unqualified staff might be employed as social workers in the field, or as social work department managers.

## **Regulatory Change in the 1980s**

The mid-1980s saw new regulations introduced in respect of boarding out (foster care) and residential care (1987). While there is much in both of these instruments that is familiar from what went before, there are new elements, most especially in relation to decision making about placements and ensuring these were appropriate, and where appropriate to the age of the child, about ensuring children were able to voice their opinions.

### **Regulations for Foster Care**

Strathclyde region issued new guidelines for foster care in 1985. This was likely in anticipation of the new regulations. The regulations issued in 1985 and implemented in 1986 superseded the 1959 statutory instrument.<sup>674</sup> There was no decline in the view that community placements provided better outcomes for children. But local

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<sup>672</sup> See GCA, SR27/10/3: Practice Guidelines for Social Workers; 'Job Description: Head of Establishment' (SRC, 1982).

<sup>673</sup> Ibid., 'Management Support Within the Keyworker System'; this 3-page document provided advice to managers of care homes about supporting a keyworker model and speaks about facilitating training.

<sup>674</sup> Statutory Instruments 1985 No. 1799 (S. 135): The Boarding-out and Fostering of Children (Scotland) Regulations 1985.



authorities, certainly in Strathclyde, did tighten procedures involved with fostering even as they expanded its remit to include more children—including older children and children who had been in trouble with the law. Increasingly, foster parents were encouraged to see themselves as colleagues of social workers—with both parties equally dedicated to the welfare of individual children.<sup>675</sup> The new regulations reflected such change by placing a great deal of emphasis on the selection of foster parents. Of note in the regulations are the following regarding foster parents.

A fostering panel now had to be responsible for the selection of foster parents and for approving placements made to them. In respect of specific categories of foster children Schedule 1 of the regulations set out what was demanded of a foster parent and included multiple references to many different pieces of legislation and the exclusions these created. Social workers now had to be sure about all the different circumstances in which prospective foster parents may have looked after children in the past, or previously applied to look after children, or importantly, have been turned down in such applications. Applicants now had to declare why they wanted to foster and under what circumstances (as detailed in (a) to (c) above).<sup>676</sup> This emphasised that boarding out need not only be for the long term and could encompass many other circumstances. The 1985 instrument also assisted local authorities in their need for more foster parents by allowing cohabiting couples and single men to apply.<sup>677</sup>

Where the foster child is concerned, Schedule 2, Part 1 of the regulations state that the local authority had to ascertain '[t]he child's wishes and feelings in relation to fostering in general or proposed placement with a foster parent as the case may be, including any wished in respect of religious and cultural upbringing.'<sup>678</sup> And Part V of the regulations states that a foster parent had to be provided with:

- (i) Written information about the child's background, health, and mental and emotional development; and
- (ii) any other information which the care authority considers relevant to the placement including information about the child's wishes and feelings about the

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<sup>675</sup> NRS ED11/630: Boarding Out: Fostering Workshops; SWSG, 'Foster Care for Children: Report of a "Workshop" on Selected Topics Arranged by the Central Advisory Service of the Social Work Services Group between March and September 1978', Paper 1: 'How Should Social Workers View Foster Parents' p. 5.

<sup>676</sup> Ibid., Schedule 1, in particular para. 7.

<sup>677</sup> Ibid., Part III (14) (a) & (b).

<sup>678</sup> Ibid., Schedule 2, Part 1, para 14.

placement so far as this is appropriate having regard to his age and understanding.<sup>679</sup>

These new regulations also took account of the operation of Children's Hearings and that local authorities could make recommendations to a Panel for a child to be cared for by a foster guardian in preference to other forms of care.<sup>680</sup>

There were no changes to the minimum requirement that local authority social workers must visit the foster home every three months.<sup>681</sup>

### Regulations for Residential Care

In 1987 further regulations emerged for residential establishments.<sup>682</sup> As with the regulations issued on boarding out and foster care these superseded the 1959 statutory instrument, and also in this case, the Approved Schools (Scotland) Rules, 1961. The fact that the latter had not been replaced until this point was anomalous given that List D schools had replaced Approved Schools and was a reflection of what a sticking point these establishments had presented in terms of oversight and rule-making on discipline. The new regulations came into force in 1988. A recent and full explanation of their contents is available elsewhere.<sup>683</sup> However, of note in terms of regulation to protect children and prevent abuse is that while managers of residential establishments still had the power to decide on matters of discipline this no longer included the use of corporal punishment:

Arrangements for discipline, relevant to the care and control of children resident in a residential establishment, shall be determined by the managers in accordance with the statement of functions and objectives formulated under regulation 5(1).

The arrangements shall not authorise the giving of corporal punishment and corporal punishment shall for this purpose have the same meaning as in section 48A of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980(7).<sup>684</sup>

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<sup>679</sup> Ibid., Part V (23), i & ii.

<sup>680</sup> Ibid., Part IV (20) & (21).

<sup>681</sup> Ibid., Part III (18) ii.

<sup>682</sup> Statutory Instruments 1987 No. 2233 (S.150): The Social Work (Residential Establishments Child Care) (Scotland) Regulations 1987.

<sup>683</sup> Norrie, *Legislative Background to the Treatment of Children and Young Persons Subject to State Regulation of Their Residence: Part Three 1968 to 1995*, pp. 37-41.

<sup>684</sup> Ibid., Part 2 (10) 1 & 2.

## Attitudes to Children

At the commencement of the period under review, in 1968, a Scottish Office inspector looking at the operation of a voluntary home in East Lothian examined a punishment book kept by the matron in charge. In this, a number of different punishments were outlined including one where a girl received a 'soapy mouth wash' for bad language:

I asked Miss ----- what form this mouth wash took. She said she made a soapy lather in a mug of water with carbolic soap, put a teaspoon of salt in and made the girl swill her moth out with the mixture. She said this has been in use since 1940.<sup>685</sup>

Two other young children (under 5-years of age) were bitten on the back of the hand by the matron for having been found biting.<sup>686</sup> Several other entries on this report by an inspector detail the use of the strap on girls. The matron was not much repentant and declared that she had been told that she was free to administer punishment as 'she saw fit';<sup>687</sup> though after the encounter with the inspector, she agreed that in future that she would be mindful of regulations on discipline and desist from mouth washing with soap. The inspector recommended 'no further action' was necessary.<sup>688</sup> Twenty years later, such an encounter would have been alien. Corporal punishment of this nature was not allowed in residential care by regulation, but more to the point, discipline administered in homes was unlikely to be under the eye of a Scottish Office representative.

Yet for all the change wrought by legislation and regulation since 1968 which may be seen to reflect changes in wider social attitudes, the question of how attitudes towards children in care changed is still difficult to answer. While some parts of the childcare system may have forged ahead with new ideas, some old ideas were hard to shift. In Part I of this report we asserted that children placed in care were subject to two competing stereotypes: that of the poor, neglected child deserving of sympathy and that of the potential miscreant who needed to be subjected to discipline and control. While it is straightforward to demonstrate from within archival material—in the shape of childcare reports—that attitudes to children, their rights as

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<sup>685</sup> NRS ED11/854/2: Discipline: Corporal Punishment; 'Christie Home, Haddington—Punishment': punishment noted to have taken place in March 1968, p. 2.

<sup>686</sup> Ibid., entry dated as taking place May 1968.

<sup>687</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>688</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

individuals and the obligation that existed to treat children's needs with respect had changed considerably, it is much more difficult to show how such views from on high were interpreted by those who had day-to-day responsibility for child welfare. Most children's homes had been divested of matrons, but as we have seen, staff qualified in residential childcare were still at a premium.

We have seen in some of the case studies presented in section 7 that the needs of children do not seem always to have been recognised or recognised quickly enough, when social workers were faced with competing needs of other members of the family. In these cases, although attitudes to children's welfare had shifted towards protecting their right to remain with their family and in their community, as opposed to removing them immediately to the Highlands, the need to keep children with their family might have become just as rigid as the attitude it replaced. Moreover, the need to keep children out of residential homes may be viewed in this light as a negative response rather than a positive one—a need based upon the knowledge that residential care was deficient.

The publication of 'Who Cares?' in 1977 gave attention to the damaging effects of the care system for many children and the need for change.<sup>689</sup> By this time, while progressive social work departments may have formulated policy that reflected changed attitudes towards children, these ideas needed to be heard by people directly responsible for daily care in services run by both voluntary organisations and statutory authorities. In 1979, the 'Room to Grow' report, seemed aware of this disconnect when it asserted that the 'rights of children in care is controversial. Rigid professional viewpoints, expert opinions and advice must be balanced with the wishes and feelings of the child.'<sup>690</sup>

The issue of discipline and punishment is one where divided opinion about the rights of the child and the relative rights of adults to have control over children is seen most forcefully. 'Room to Grow' recommended that the regional council should 'consider their position concerning punishment in Children's Homes in general terms, but, in particular, to corporal punishment.' The authors were unhappy about the fact that this matter was left to the discretion of the persons in charge and based on their research claimed that 'the majority of staff questioned on this stated that some "smacking" was necessary'. The report concluded that the notion of 'smacking' in this

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<sup>689</sup> R. Page and G. A Clark (eds.) *Who Cares? Young People in Care Speak Out* (London, 1977).

<sup>690</sup> 'Room to Grow' Report, p. 4.

context could 'be open to misinterpretation'. The recommendation was made that smacking children with instruments such as 'a belt, a cane or slipper' should end and 'the whole question of punishment be examined in detail and a policy statement issued to all'.<sup>691</sup> We have not recovered such a policy statement.

Allegations of abuse could cause similar uncertainty between managers and care staff, and even between different approaches taken by different organisations involved with children. In 1978, a letter was sent to Strathclyde's director of social work from the Church of Scotland's director of social work. The letter relates the following:

I wish to bring to your notice as per the Children and Young Persons regulations 1959, No 834 (s.43) Section 13, an alleged incident involving the above named boy who is in care at ----- Home for Children...and a male volunteer. The boy has alleged that the volunteer tried to molest him.

Our social worker and Children's Homes Supervisor have consulted with the Area Teams concerned and I understand that the Area Teams will be reporting the matter to you. In the circumstances, I feel that if you think any legal prosecution is appropriate, I would like to know as soon as possible so that appropriate action can be taken. If you feel this is inappropriate since the boy is under the care of your Department, I would like a statement from you to this effect.

We have taken the action of instructing the volunteer not to have any further contact with the boy, and the boy has been instructed to have no further contact with him.<sup>692</sup>

This matter was passed to a Strathclyde deputy who replied to the Church of Scotland's director the following day stating that:

The Regional Council policy in a situation like this, is that the matter should be referred to the Police for investigation, and the member of staff is suspended from duty pending the outcome of the investigation. I note that you have instructed the volunteer not to have further contact with the boy and I would assume that on reflection, you consider that the volunteer should have no contact whatsoever with ----, or any other child in the home until the

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<sup>691</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>692</sup> GCA, SR27/5/1/65: Children in Care-General; letter to F. Edwards, Strathclyde Region Director of Social Work dated 5 October 1978 from F. S. Gibson, Director of Social Work Church of Scotland Committee on Social Responsibility [one of two items of correspondence in this case].

matter is cleared up. I would be grateful if you would inform the police and keep me advised as the result of the police investigation.<sup>693</sup>

Unfortunately, no further documents relating to this case have been recovered and we do not know what information was passed to the area social work team responsible for this child or what the outcomes were of any further enquiry by them or by police investigation. We can see, however, that this was a situation where a divergence of opinion may have existed and that the Church of Scotland's social agency did not have a clear policy of their own beyond adhering to statutory regulations—that is, they informed the local authority. The issue of whether a child might be believed when making allegations of abuse is writ large in such evidence: the Strathclyde social work depute had to suggest politely that the voluntary agency might consider removing the alleged perpetrator from the children's home.<sup>694</sup>

In their research done in 1977-8, the Officer/Member group collected some testimony from children in residential care, including how they perceived what other people thought about children being in care. The extracts presented in the report show that the children placed in residential homes felt stigmatised by their position: 'I don't think anyone understands. I think they think it is your fault not your parents, because they go on as if it's your fault.' One child is quoted as saying, 'I think we get classed up here as hooligans'. Where the children's thoughts on the homes and the staff were concerned, children remarked on the intrusiveness of the culture and feelings that staff were spying on them; children seemed well aware that staff could not give individual attention, and one remarked that 'I couldn't say that I really, definitely, trusted anyone here.' Pointedly some children commented on staff turnover.<sup>695</sup> Overall, this testimony does not suggest that children felt safe, or were able to assert themselves—strongly suggested in these extracts are intimations of powerlessness within a system.

The childcare system in Scotland was ahead of its time in some ways. In bringing together the needs of some children for care and protection, with those of young people who had committed offences, this scheme foregrounded the rights of all such children to be exposed to appropriate measures of care tailored to individual

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<sup>693</sup> Ibid., letter from Mr McNeil, Senior Depute Director of Social Work [signature illegible] dated 6 October 1978 to F. S. Gibson.

<sup>694</sup> See Samina Karim, 'Why 'Historic' Abuse? Experiences of Children Reporting Abuse' (2017) *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care*, Vol.16:3, p. 6 & 12.

<sup>695</sup> 'What Children Think About Care', 'Room to Grow' Report, pp. 119-124.

interests. This type of thinking cut across opposed stereotypes. The operation of Children's Hearings also aimed to provide a platform for a child to speak.<sup>696</sup>

By 1985, the options for young people such as Child K were re-examined in Strathclyde. This care review called for a decrease in the use of assessment centres and a shift towards community-based evaluations of what was needed for young people deemed 'at risk'. It also remarked on the declining use of List D places.<sup>697</sup> The report emphasised preventative strategies once again and stated:

The major thrust of the work is to discriminate in favour of those thought to be most at risk by actively encouraging their participation in decision making regarding how to resolve issues affecting them within the locality.<sup>698</sup>

The language used in this report signalled how far the attitudes of social workers towards children had changed by the 1980s yet the available care resources for children did not reflect such transformation. The 1985 Strathclyde Care Strategy called for a 'coherent and more responsive service' one that makes use of 'joint assessment decision making between teachers, Child Guidance and Social Workers'.<sup>699</sup> It then proceeded to outline a number of proposed closures of residential facilities.

While local authorities recognised the need for a greater range of care strategies, the critical role of skilled residential staff, and the importance of careful assessment and ongoing monitoring to safeguard children's wellbeing, the system that existed did not match these grand ambitions.

## **Reform in the 1990s**

Whatever deficiencies existed in the old method of inspecting children's homes by the Scottish Office's childcare inspectorate, the absence of this form of oversight, from the early 1970s onwards, created a vacuum. Arguably, the inspectorate's field of interest, especially before the 1960s, often placed too much emphasis on structural

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<sup>696</sup> See also Alf Young, 'Children's panels: a Strathclyde Member's View, Scottish Yearbook 1981, pp. 187-202; Young stated the opinion in his essay that this platform did not easily facilitate this 'Sitting three independent lay members down at a table, furnishing them with reports in advance and giving them half an hour with an inarticulate and possibly intimidated fourteen year old and his parents, in the hope that they will uncover the root causes of that boy's problems, is asking quite a lot' p. 195.

<sup>697</sup> GCA, SR1/2/101: SRC Social Work Committee: A Care Strategy for Young People in Trouble, Report by the Director of Social Work (1985).

<sup>698</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>699</sup> Ibid., p. 1.



aspects of the care facilities at the expense of other important characteristics of the culture of Homes and how these impacted on children's welfare. While fire regulations and the variety of diets fed to children were important, less tangible facets of care were just as crucial for protecting children. When inspectors delved into these, their findings would often be impressionistic and lacking in concrete evidence that could be used to challenge care providers. The fact that reports were not shared with the managers of facilities was also problematic, and that visits were usually pre-announced similarly so.

At the root of inspection dilemma was the lack of clear, national guidelines about desired standards in childcare; regulations set minimum standards but did not necessarily inspire aspirations to do better. Compliance with the letter of regulations was a kind of blunt tool that allowed providers to meet minimum standards while still delivering care that was deficient in meeting many of the needs of children. Inspectors could do little about this beyond recording personal reservations.

When local authorities were given primary responsibility for oversight of childcare facilities the focus of provision had changed, and it would change further. The aim of the system of care in place was that it would be professionally led by qualified and experienced social workers. Yet while social workers had responsibility for oversight of individual children on a regular basis by regulation, there was no requirement to assess them specifically within the locus of the residential home. Oversight of institutions therefore fell by the wayside. We have noted how this issue was raised in the early 1970s in Glasgow as necessary to monitor and establish standards.<sup>700</sup> No evidence has been recovered that this recommendation was ever acted upon.

It would be 1991 before this matter raised its head properly. An Inspection Unit for Strathclyde region was set up that year.<sup>701</sup> The Unit had a Head of the Inspection Team in charge, and three Principal Inspectors—each managing roughly one third of the region. Each of these three teams also had a Senior Inspector and 13 full-time inspectors were spread across the full area. In addition, the Unit had 15 administrative staff of different grades. Following induction of the team, inspections began at the end of January 1992. The procedure of inspections was thereafter periodically reviewed. It must be noted however, that this Unit inspected all forms of

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<sup>700</sup> I. Bailie and P. Bates, 'Child care in Glasgow: Future Strategies and Points Requiring Action', pp. 1-2.

<sup>701</sup> Available evidence within this file does not provide a clear indication about why this measure was taken, but it may have been a result of the NHS and Community Care Act, 1990, if so, this would have applied similarly to all other regions in Scotland.

institutions in place—caring for adults with special needs, the elderly and children; all inspectors covered all types of institutions whether for adult, elderly or childcare.

Inspection visits involved two team members and lasted on average two days. Of note, is that at this time while the numbers of institutions overall rose between 1991-3, the number of childcare institutions fell, as illustrated here:<sup>702</sup>

<b>Childcare Institutions</b>	<b>April 1992</b>	<b>April 1993</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>-6</b>
<b>Private</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1</b>
<b>Voluntary</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>-7</b>

Provision for children by the voluntary sector was 19.7 percent.<sup>703</sup> The childcare institutions inspected, including those in the statutory and voluntary sectors contained a total of around 1390 beds—the majority local authority managed.<sup>704</sup> There were 66 childcare establishments in Strathclyde region.<sup>705</sup> Their capacity was as follows:

<b>CAPACITY</b>	<b>0-10 BEDS</b>	<b>11-20</b>	<b>21-30</b>	<b>31-40</b>	<b>41+</b>
<b>L.A. Establishments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Private Establishments</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Vol. Establishments</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>

As can be seen, most local authority facilities had fewer than 30 beds; even so, there were still four that had over 41 beds. Most large institutions were run by voluntary

<sup>702</sup> GCA, SR1/2 Box 23: SRC Social Work Committee; Strathclyde Regional Council, Inspection Unit Annual Report, 1993, Introduction by the Director of Social Work, p. 6

<sup>703</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>704</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>705</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

bodies. These may have included List D schools. Following an inspection, verbal feedback was given by inspectors and Scottish Office advice was for inspections to take place twice per year, however, the report highlights that:

The allocation of inspection staff to the unit makes this impossible, and it unlikely that all establishments will have been subject of an initial arm's length inspection until the end of 1993. The staffing situation has been made more acute at present, with the required non-filling of two Inspector vacancies due to savings imposed throughout the Social Work Department.<sup>706</sup>

The Inspection Unit itself was, like many of the facilities it inspected, ultimately accountable to the Director of Social Work. We have no further evidence about the work of this inspectorate: it was likely a short-lived experiment, overtaken by other reforms undertaken at a national level, and further local government re-organisation.

In the same period, an Inspectorate had been re-established at the Scottish Office. The era of allowing local authorities to be guided only by their own professional judgement in assessing the standards set for services was drawing to a close. This is not to say that throughout, the 1970s and 1980s local authority social work departments needed external oversight in order that problems might be seen clearly; the example of Strathclyde shows that managers within this department were perfectly able to recognise deficiencies and poor standards—successive reports show this. What Strathclyde was unable to do however, in every instance, was find a way to address these that ensured all children in their care met only the highest standards in centres of excellence. The idea of inspection that had directive powers—the teeth to compel improvements and put a stop to poor care standards—was thus back on the table by the close of this report's timeframe.

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<sup>706</sup> Ibid., Report, Section 1.3, no page.

## Summary

The 1968 Social Work Act placed the emphasis on prevention which subsequent reform and regulation served to reiterate. There is little doubt that once all children in the care of the state were overseen by a social worker the quality of oversight of their day-to-day care improved. And yet the increasing focus on attending to the complex needs of the whole family could have the unintended consequence of placing the child's specific needs in the shade. The case studies outlined above suggest that children in this period could be shuttled from pillar to post, between their natural family and various forms of care as a result of efforts to keep the family together. In these circumstances it is difficult not to come to the conclusion that children's welfare was sometimes put at risk.

On the other hand, the new regime did allow for children to express their views (and in theory, report mistreatment or abuse)—a situation that was rarely seen in the period before 1968 owing to the few opportunities for children to speak to authority figures alone.

There was a lacuna in the oversight of residential children's homes in the period c.1968 and the early 1990s. In the pre-1968 period at least, all children's homes were inspected by the Scottish Office and cases of mistreatment and abuse did come to light (albeit via circuitous routes). After 1968 with local authority registration of homes it is hard to see who was responsible for standards of care in general in both local authority and voluntary-run homes. Foster care, on the other hand, was subject to tighter oversight with prospective foster parents vetted prior to being approved.

Another area of improvement in this period was staff training. While in the period before the Social Work Act there was limited opportunity for staff in all areas of provision to access in-service training and qualifications, this changed markedly amongst field social workers though the change was slower to come about amongst residential care workers. The low status of residential workers in comparison with that of field workers also remained problematic; in 1989 it was stated that within 'staff in residential work as a whole, there are enormous numbers in direct caring roles who have no form of social work or social care qualification-no less than 85% of houseparents in childrens' homes [sic], for example'.<sup>707</sup>

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<sup>707</sup> Yelloly, p. 271.

This report sought to describe the systems in place to protect children in care in Scotland and to assess the effectiveness of those systems and processes. In the period after the Social Work Act 1968 it is clear that responsibility lay almost entirely in the hands of local authorities with the Scottish Office adopting an advisory role. This report's analysis of how that operated in the case of Glasgow indicates a number of things:

- That staffing was still stretched to deal with the new social work regime, particularly in circumstances in which many children coming into care belonged to families with complex needs
- That out of home care still comprised a mix of foster care and residential care with the latter declining over the period (though residential care was still regularly employed for mostly short term placements and for sibling groups)
- That local authority oversight of the quality of care standards in children's homes—especially in voluntary run homes—must be questioned in the absence of evidence that inspections were undertaken
- That individual children undoubtedly had more contact with local authority and other professionals and had more opportunities to express their views about their needs and their care.

## Appendix 1: Statistics for Children in Care, 1948-1994.

### NOTE:

It is difficult to be precise about the numbers of children in care in Scotland over this timeframe as this was a constantly shifting population wherein children left care and were newly brought into the care system. The evolution of different policies regarding how children should be cared for are also relevant in this context.

Statistics collated by Kendrick and Hawthorn in 2012 likely represent the most accurate, recent assessment done for the period 1952 onwards.<sup>708</sup> These figures are replicated in the table below. As Kendrick and Hawthorn indicate, there are also some gaps in knowledge that resulted from local government reorganisation in the mid-1970s.<sup>709</sup>

We have identified the following original sources as containing relevant statistics about children in care. Within the National Records of Scotland, there are the following files, which can be consulted:

FILE REF.	FILE NAME	DATES
ED11/ 314	Homeless Children Bill: Statistics	1947
ED15/174	Children in Care of Local Authorities	1953-1961
ED39/287	Children's Hearings and Children in Care	1975-1980
ED39/866	Annual Statistics from Local Authorities	1960-1969
ED60/1/1- ED60/1/13	Statistical Bulletins	1979-1993

### Other published sources containing relevant statistics:

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<sup>708</sup>Andrew Kendrick and Moyra Hawthorn, *Survivors of Childhood Abuse in Care Scoping Project on Children in Care in Scotland, 1930 - 2005* (University of Strathclyde June 2012); this document is available online at: <https://www.celcis.org/files/1614/3878/5242/Confidential-Forum-Adult-Survivors-childhood-Abuse-v2.pdf> [accessed 7 March 2019]

<sup>709</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Scottish Education Department, *Education in Scotland in 1962: A Report of the Secretary of State for Scotland* (Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland by Command of Her Majesty April, 1963) Cmnd. 1975

Scottish Education Department, *Education in Scotland in 1963: A Report of the Secretary of State for Scotland* (Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland by Command of Her Majesty April, 1964) Cmnd. 2307

Scottish Education Department, *Education in Scotland in 1964: A Report of the Secretary of State for Scotland* (Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland by Command of Her Majesty April, 1965) Cmnd. 2600

Scottish Education Department, *Education in Scotland in 1965: A Report of the Secretary of State for Scotland* (Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland by Command of Her Majesty April, 1966) Cmnd. 2914

Scottish Education Department, *Child Care, 1966 (Including Remand Homes and Approved Schools): A Report of the Secretary of State for Scotland* (Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland by Command of Her Majesty April, 1967) Cmnd. 3241

Social Work Services Group, *Child Care, 1967 (Including Remand Homes and Approved Schools): A Report of the Secretary of State for Scotland* (Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland by Command of Her Majesty July, 1968) Cmnd. 3682

Social Work Services Group, *Child Care, 1968 (Including Remand Homes and Approved Schools): A Report of the Secretary of State for Scotland* (Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland by Command of Her Majesty July, 1969) Cmnd. 4069

Scottish Education Department, *Social Work in Scotland in 1969* (Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland by Command of Her Majesty December, 1970) Cmnd. 4475

Scottish Education Department, *Social Work in Scotland in 1970* (Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland by Command of Her Majesty December, 1971) Cmnd. 4834

The *Scottish Abstract of Statistics* published annually by the Scottish Office between 1971 and 1998.



Ahead of the Children Act, in 1947-8, the number of children in care (including those placed in voluntary homes not under the care of local authorities) was estimated by the Scottish Office Home Department to be around **14,175**.<sup>710</sup> However, this figure included approximately 600 children under the Adoption of Children (Regulation) Act 1939; and around 1,500 covered by Child Life protection legislation. Those in care under the Poor Law were numbered at 6,600; under the Children and Young Persons Act, 1937 the figure stated was 1,624. Children placed in voluntary homes under private arrangements were estimated at around 3,851. Therefore, children either boarded out or in children's homes (either local authority or voluntary-run) were a total of **12, 075**. However, the latter total is likely a little inflated because it included some children in convalescent care or, in other long stay establishments for children with special health needs that might be reclassified following the Children Act as being educational establishments.

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<sup>710</sup> ED11/314: Homeless Children Bill: Statistics.

Kendrick and Hawthorn provide the following statistics in relation to the period following the adoption of the Children Act:

YEAR	BOARDED OUT				LOCAL AUTHORITY RUN HOMES	VOLUNTARY HOMES		N OF CHILDREN IN CARE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES
						<i>Total No.</i>	<i>Not placed by local authorities</i>	
1949	5519				1322	5578	1663	9068
1950	5581				1482	5075	1794	9537
1951	5958				1571	4677	1941	10031

YEAR	CHILDREN IN CARE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES				TOTAL	NOT IN CARE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES: PLACED IN VOLUNTARY HOMES	TOTAL OF ALL CHILDREN
	BOARDED OUT	IN L/A HOMES	IN VOL. HOMES	ELSE WHERE*			
1952	6062	1618	1542	1028	10250	3090	13340
1953	5990	1772	1498	888	10148	2850	12998
1954	6185	1702	1391	966	10244	2670	12914
1955	6190	1687	1275	918	10070	2665	12735
1956	6117	1688	1244	909	9958	2625	12583

<b>1957</b>	6037	1658	1225	905	<b>9825</b>	2659	<b>12484</b>
<b>1958</b>	5849	1679	1340	782	<b>9650</b>	2355	<b>12005</b>
<b>1959</b>	5902	1623	1355	738	<b>9618</b>	2144	<b>11762</b>
<b>1960</b>	5900	1622	1282	876	<b>9680</b>	2100	<b>11780</b>
<b>1961</b>	5875	1706	1516	845	<b>9942</b>	1808	<b>11750</b>
<b>1962</b>	5950	1706	1546	810	<b>10012</b>	1823	<b>11835</b>
<b>1963</b>	6165	1719	1474	805	<b>10163</b>	1835	<b>11998</b>
<b>1964</b>	6305	1735	1513	776	<b>10329</b>	1458	<b>11787</b>
<b>1965</b>	6298	1749	1646	764	<b>10457</b>	790	<b>11247</b>
<b>1966</b>	6385	1775	1832	662	<b>10654</b>	774	<b>11428</b>
<b>1967</b>	6300	1799	1791	750	<b>10640</b>	673	<b>11313</b>
<b>1968</b>	6207	1743	1841	851	<b>10642</b>	579	<b>11221</b>
<b>1969</b>	6092	1776	1976	953	<b>10797</b>	424	<b>11221</b>

Source: Andrew Kendrick and Moyra Hawthorn, *Survivors of Childhood Abuse in Care Scoping Project on Children in Care in Scotland, 1930 - 2005* (University of Strathclyde June 2012), pp.46 & 48.

\*The designation 'Elsewhere' is not defined; it is possible this might include children placed in private fostering arrangements, or placed in privately-run child guidance facilities.

These figures represent the population of children in some form of care under the Social Work (Scotland) Act, 1968. Those designated 'other community' may have been with family or friends or in some form of day care.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>At home</b>	<b>Foster care</b>	<b>Other community</b>	<b>Residential care</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1970</b>		5779			<b>c11008</b>
<b>1971</b>	1434	5516	1534	6304	<b>14778</b>
<b>1972</b>	6818	5500	1038	5810	<b>19166</b>
<b>1973</b>	8230	5661	527	6285	<b>20703</b>
<b>1974</b>	8259	5576	313	6405	<b>20553</b>
<b>1975</b>	--	--	--	--	<b>18936</b>
<b>1976</b>	5883	3763	1430	6242	<b>17318</b>
<b>1977</b>	5593	3733	1337	6209	<b>16872</b>
<b>1978</b>	--	--	--	6109	<b>17107</b>
<b>1979</b>	--	--	--	5888	<b>16887</b>
<b>1980</b>	5736	5193		5916	<b>16845</b>
<b>1981</b>	6128	5152		5765	<b>17045</b>
<b>1982</b>	6155	5074		4855	<b>16084</b>
<b>1983</b>	6140	4901		4205	<b>15529</b>
<b>1984</b>	5615	3040	1645	3483	<b>13783</b>
<b>1985</b>	5740	2877	1283	3361	<b>13261</b>
<b>1986</b>	6193	2886	1180	3060	<b>13319</b>
<b>1987</b>	5949	2759	1025	2784	<b>12517</b>

<b>1988</b>	6064	2620	939	2664	<b>12287</b>
<b>1989</b>	6262	2560	851	2364	<b>12037</b>
<b>1990</b>	7128	2593	928	2313	<b>12962</b>
<b>1991</b>	6625	2492	1147	2401	<b>12665</b>
<b>1992</b>	6527	2746	1200	2298	<b>12771</b>
<b>1993</b>	6447	2574	1221	2124	<b>12371</b>
<b>1994</b>	6335	2589	1121	2083	<b>12128</b>
Source: Andrew Kendrick and Moyra Hawthorn, <i>Survivors of Childhood Abuse in Care Scoping Project on Children in Care in Scotland, 1930 - 2005</i> (University of Strathclyde June 2012), p.55.					

## Appendix 2: Social Policy for Children—Social Work Sub-Model

AGE GROUP	OBJECTIVES	CONSTRAINTS/PROBLEMS	ACTION/RECOMMENDATIONS	AGENCIES INVOLVED
All ages	To promote the rights of children and to neutralise impediments to the child's healthy development.	Low staffing levels; lack of policy or priority statement; inadequate administrative back-up; present facilities often poorly sited; stereo-type approach to service delivery; scarcity of day care back-up services; remoteness of management; nil involvement of training agencies.	Acceptance of guide for Social Work establishment; Policy and priority Statement. Appropriate administrative support; siting of facilities in communities to be served. Varied service delivery methods; Provision of Day Care services for children linked to community needs; Involvement of Community in decisions about service provision; Rationalisation of management structure to maximise accountability and easy communication. Involvement of Social Work training agencies in practice and management.	Central Government Housing Department Community Child Parents Colleges and University Social Work Departments Local Authority
All ages	<u>Area Teams</u>  An effective professional service related and responsive to the needs of the child, the family and the community.			
All ages	<u>Residential Establishments</u>  A service related to the child's needs for affection, security, dignity, personal identity,	Low level of appropriately trained staff; poorly sited homes; staff poorly paid; residential staff poorly represented within the managements structure; homes poorly designed for child care offered; lack of clarity in objectives	Priority to training residential staff. Pay Parity with fieldwork staff. Purpose built children's homes more closely related to areas served. Better representation of residential staff at all levels of management. Clarification and variety in objectives of children's homes.	Central Government Colleges and University Social Work Departments



	self-respect, learning, achievement, independence, and responsibility.	of children's homes; absence of consistent review systems; little involvement of child or parents in decisions; fragmented management of resources.	Comprehensive review systems. Involvement of child and parents in decisions.	Child Parents Voluntary Bodies Housing Department Local Authority
All ages	<u>Fostering and Adoption</u>  Placement of children according to their needs	Unimaginative use of services; lack of support systems; financial constraints; poor staffing levels.	More flexible use of fostering and adoption.  Professional foster parents.  Fostering Campaign.  Sponsored adoptions.  More realistic fostering allowances.	Central Government  Media  Local Authority.
All ages	<u>Day Care Services</u>  To offer children and parents supports in their own communities in an attempt to	Financial; traditional thinking.	Support and encouragement of playgroups;  Development of Day Care facilities in deprived areas in conjunction with Education & Health Departments;	Pre-School Playgroup Association.  Education; Health

	diminish the need for the child to be received into care.		Promotion, registering and support of childminding; Support for community initiatives; Commitment to devt. Of Intermediate Treatment, Corporate approach of SW, Health & Education.	Voluntary Bodies Housing Department Central Government Local Authority.
Source: Strathclyde Regional Council, 'Room to Grow': <i>report of a special officer/member group of the councils social work committee on child care in Strathclyde</i> (Report and Discussion, November 1979) p. 113.				